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J. M. KEYNES
ON DEMOCRACY

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

FRANCO'S capture of Barcelona is a disaster which deepens anxiety throughout Europe. Having failed to raise a hand in support of Republican Spain, the British and French Governments now find themselves faced with an increasingly menacing situation. Though Franco is bombing and machine-gunning large numbers of civilians on the roads of Catalonia, many are falling back on to the French frontier. Britain is appealing to Franco to refrain from vengeance, and France is proposing a zone for refugees. But the alarm in Britain and France is due to a catastrophically late realisation that a Franco victory in Catalonia means not a period of rest, but an immediate intensification of pressure from the axis. Hitler is to make an important pronouncement to the Reichstag on Monday—a pronouncement which may be cautious, but which may be as fateful as his Nuremberg speech last September. In his speech on Saturday Mr. Chamberlain will no doubt attempt to persuade the Führer of the dangers of too drastic demands. In any case it seems likely that Hitler will back Italian claims against France, possibly supplementing them with colonial demands against Britain and supporting them with the familiar technique of a partial mobilisation in the west of Germany.

Spain and the Axis

The attitude of Britain and France will no doubt depend on the nature of the demands. Mr. Chamberlain will hope for a Four-Power settlement. But the possibilities of "appeasement" are now very restricted and the presence of Italian troops, supported by Italian aeroplanes and German batteries and technicians, close to the Pyrenees puts France in a difficult position for any bargain. That the war in Spain was from the outset a war against France and Britain has always been obvious to people not blinded by class prejudice. Nor has the German press been reticent on the matter. A newly published book, *Britain in Spain* (Hamish Hamilton, 3*s.* 6*d.*), by an "Unknown Diplomat," gives some illuminating quotations. On June 13th, 1938, the *National Zeitung* explained that the Maginot line is no protection for France:

> Since the Rome-Berlin axis there is a new front on the Italian Alps, where there is no Maginot line. And suddenly, to the West, on the Pyrenean frontier has arisen a national State allied to the Italian-German axis, the richest

State in Europe as regards the raw materials needed for modern war.

To which General Göring's paper adds:

Barcelona is the nerve centre where the Mediterranean influence of France can be paralysed, if the Italians instal themselves in Catalonia as they have already installed themselves in the Balearics.

The one hopeful fact is the growing discontent and fear of war in Germany—especially in the old Austria. If British speeches and British broadcasting continually made the right kind of appeal, the whole situation might be changed.

The Menace to France

The Fascist victories in Spain have exposed the dissensions in the French Chamber and the Cabinet. Most ordinary men can see pretty clearly the dangers that threaten France, now that through French and British folly the Spanish Republic has been betrayed and destroyed. And even the unordinary people who write the *Temps* have talked of the necessity of occupying Minorca and Spanish Morocco, if Mussolini does not fulfil his pledge to withdraw completely when General Franco has finished his devil's work. But there are divided opinions in the Government as well as in Parliament, and M. Bonnet and those who think with him appear to be under the illusion that sending an ambassador to Burgos will go far to protect French interests and to guarantee amicable relations between France and the Spain of to-morrow. No one, however, has as yet suggested capitulation to Italy's claims on France, which are being voiced with undiminished fury in the Fascist press, and which, there can be little doubt, will very soon be pressed in dead earnest by the Duce. The French are strengthening their defences at Jibouti, whilst more Italian troops and guns are reported to be going to Libya.

Count Ciano's Activity

If it be true that Hitler has decided temporarily to slow up the *Drang nach Osten*, at any rate so far as military action is concerned, he may have been influenced in part by the marked absence of enthusiasm in Italy for this aspect of Axis policy. The Duce wants payment for his Munich services, cash down—in French and Spanish coin—and his decree recalling to the colours next week 60,000 men of the 1901 class is a hint that debt collecting in the Mediterranean may be forcible. His hope is obviously that Hitler will back Italian claims and will not concentrate on an Eastern policy from which Rome has nothing to gain. Indeed, there are indications that Italy is distinctly concerned at the extent to which Germany's economic penetration of the Balkans is ousting Italian exporters from the market. The purpose of Count Ciano's recent talks with Dr. Stoyadinovitch was to endeavour to retain some of the Jugoslav market for Italy. The next move of the Duce's Foreign Secretary will be to visit Warsaw. On the way, however, he may step off at Berlin—for orders.

The "New Order in East Asia"

The League Council at its final sitting last week passed a watery resolution of sympathy with China, and invited members of the League to examine Dr. Wellington Koo's demands for effective aid. If there is to be any effective aid to China, it will clearly have to come in the main from Great Britain and the United States, acting in concert. We hope that the two Governments will make more than a perfunctory examination of the measures that they could take. Japan's attitude is still one of cool defiance to the Western Powers. She will of course offer no satisfactory answer to the Notes of protest presented by America, Britain and France. Mr. Arita, the Foreign Minister, expounded again the other day the Japanese plans for the "New Order in East Asia"—in which Japan, China and Manchukuo will co-operate "on an ethical foundation" for their mutual advantage, the annihilation of Communism and the peace of the world. All this high falutin' means simply that China, like Manchukuo, is to be the vassal of Japan, with the door shut to the traders of the West. Meanwhile, since China demurs to this programme, the war will go on, with its vast toll of life and property. There are many signs, including comments in the press, that the Japanese people are chafing under the strain, though this of course does not mean any serious opposition to the policy of their rulers. One pathetic suggestion (or was it meant as a joke?) is that Mr. Chamberlain should pay a visit to Tokio—presumably to arrange a "Munich" for the Chinese.

Palestine Arabs at Odds

No one yet knows when the Palestine Conference will sit down to its work, and no one is very sanguine about the results when it does. A number of the delegates—the representatives of the "other Arab States" as well as the Mufti's men—are on their way to London. But there is serious trouble between the rival factions in Palestine. The Mufti had agreed, at the solicitation of General Nuri es Said, the Iraqi Premier, to the appointment of two representatives of the "Moderates"—the National Defence Party run by the Nashashibis. But this has only led to an angry protest by Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, for of the two both chosen over his head, one, he says, is an apostate who has become a partisan of the Mufti, and the other is too ill to travel. Meanwhile, the Defence Party have been arguing with the High Commissioner in Jerusalem, and Ragheb Bey, who is now in Cairo, insists on having an equal representation with that of the Mufti's party. There appears to be little prospect of healing these dissensions either inside or outside a Conference; nor are the omens favourable for any agreement on the main issues between the Arabs as a whole and the Jews.

National Service Problems

With the publication of the National Service Guide and the official list of "reserved" occupations, the road is clear—or, at least, as clear as the Government intends to make it—for the loudly heralded voluntary recruiting campaign. Approximately half the nation's employed manhood now knows that, in the event of war, its duty will be to "stick to the job"; the remainder of the male population between the ages of 18 and 55, together with women aged 18 to 65, are free to volunteer for whole or part-time service in appropriate capacities. Advice as to choice of service, subject to the age limits now prescribed for each, will be forthcoming at Labour Exchanges and from the 200 National Service Committees which are being set up throughout the country. So far, so

good; provided willingness to serve is not damped by administrative failure effectively to absorb and train recruits, there will doubtless be a reasonably impressive influx of volunteers. It is difficult, however, to be confident that adequate preparations are being made against *Blitzenkrieg* possibilities, while no progress is visible in plans either to evacuate non-essential adults from vulnerable areas or to provide bomb-proof shelters for those whose duty it will be to remain.

The Government and the Cotton Trade

The deputation from all sections of the cotton industry which visited the Government this week pressed for the acceptance of the revised Enabling Bill which is now in the hands of the Board of Trade. But it did not suggest that the Bill would enable the industry to cope successfully with its difficulties without further help. It wanted more attention paid to the claims of the cotton trade in negotiating commercial treaties and agreements. It proposed that Lancashire should share in the concessions extended to the Special Areas; and it urged the case for subsidies to the export trade in order to enable it to compete with subsidised exports from other countries. The economic position of the cotton industry has been worsening very rapidly of late, and the system of "spreading the work" has resulted in a drastic fall of earnings that goes far beyond the ranks of the recorded unemployed. But it is also clear that, as long as we profess to govern our colonial possessions in the interests of the inhabitants, we have no right to impose dear Lancashire goods on them by excluding cheaper products which they can afford to buy in much larger quantities. Nor are the possibilities of helping Lancashire by means of trade agreements in practice very great. On the other hand, the more these difficulties are recognised, the stronger is the case for including Lancashire among the Special Areas and giving the inhabitants at any rate the meagre advantage which such an inclusion would afford.

The Railwaymen's Demands

The National Railway Staff Tribunal has now begun its hearing of the railway Trade Unions' case for improved conditions. The claims are estimated as involving a cost of about £6,750,000 a year; and the railway companies retort that they can afford nothing at all, and may have to demand actual reductions. There is a widespread belief that most railway workers are well paid on account of the strength of their Unions; and Mr. Marchbank's revelation that there are 120,000 of them whose basic rates are below 50*s*. a week will come as a surprise to many. The lower railway grades, recruited largely from rural areas, were so very badly paid before the war that wage-figures based on percentage increases since 1914 give a misleadingly favourable impression of their actual economic position to-day. In addition to wage-advances, the Unions are claiming a fortnight's paid holiday in the year, with a number of other improvements in working conditions. The companies will doubtless urge these demands as an additional reason for pressing their own claims for freedom from control over their rates and charges; but it is highly questionable whether the effect of an uncontrolled road and rail war might not be to depress instead of improve the wage-paying capacity of the railway service. Co-ordinated control, with an assured living wage for both road and rail workers, is the only real solution.

Education in London

The altercation now in progress between the Board of Education and the London County Council appears to leave the balance of argument well on the side of the L.C.C. The Board have refused to recognise for grant a proposed reduction in the size of junior and infants' classes from 44 and 46 to 42 and 44, and Lord Stanhope has accompanied his refusal with an acrimonious criticism of the L.C.C. on the ground that some of its classes in elementary schools are too large and others too small, and that the cost of education per child is substantially higher in London than in other large towns. To this the L.C.C. retorts that the decline of population within the county area has led to a preponderance of older teachers, entitled to higher salaries, and that this accounts for most of the excess cost. It also points out that the small classes existing in certain schools are due mainly to the movement of population, and that the cases of exceptionally large classes occur mainly in areas where the supply of schools has not yet caught up with the growing demand. Moreover, in 40 per cent. of the alleged cases the number in the class only exceeded the normal maximum by one single child. Obviously, the fall in child population within the L.C.C. area, and also the migration within the area, have created special problems which cannot be solved in a moment. The problems which thus arise constitute no reason at all for rejecting the L.C.C.'s decision to reduce the normal size of classes in junior and infant departments. Lord Stanhope appears to have made an ass of himself and of the Board of which he is the political head.

Parliament Square

The Pilgrim Trust's decision to grant £50,000 towards the saving of Parliament Square from the builder should at long last induce the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide a reasonable grant. As long ago as 1935 the Middlesex County Council bought the site on the north of the Square in order to prevent the erection of a vast commercial building which would have utterly ruined its appearance. The Middlesex County Council is prepared to contribute its quota to the task of preservation—for its own Guildhall stands just behind the threatened site—but it cannot be expected to carry the burden alone. The L.C.C. and the Westminster City Council are also prepared to come in; and the Ministry of Transport is ready to find £60,000 on account of the transport improvements which the preservation will secure. The Exchequer, however, has so far refused to provide more than another £40,000—or a bare tenth of the total cost of the site itself. This is ridiculous. The comely appearance of Parliament Square is a national responsibility. It affects the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and Whitehall fully as much as the Middlesex Guildhall. It will be a national crime if the site is handed over to the speculative builder because of the Government's refusal to contribute its quota to a reasonable scheme of preservation.

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DROPPING THE DECOY

THE departure of Dr. Schacht means that the second phase of the National Socialist revolution is over. Even the pretence of compromise with the Conservatives and the old army is no longer necessary and the party fanatics are now in complete control. Field-Marshal Göring and Capt. Wiedemann, who formed the *liaison* with the Moderates, give way to Ribbentrop and Himmler, the incorruptible Robespierre of the Nazi movement.

The final defeat—or rather contemptuous dismissal—of the Moderates inside Germany is a cruel blow to the advocates of economic appeasement. Ever since 1933 the wiseacres of the City have adopted a studiously conciliatory attitude to the Nazis and, in spite of constant default, have granted them concession after concession. For five long years British policy has been founded on the delusion that by making concessions to "the Moderates" we should enable them to hold the wild men at bay. Our financial and political leaders have reposed their confidence in the bankers, the industrialists and the army leaders, unaware that the gifts which we pressed into their hands were immediately handed over to the very extremists whom they were intended to check. National Socialism has not been moderated by appeasement, but has battened on it. For no one can check Hitler who is not prepared to do without him; and the Moderates, who hired him in 1933 to protect their capital against Communism, know perfectly well that his fall would precipitate a civil war in which they would not be the victors. Fighting a shadow battle against gangsters whom they dare not dismiss, German capitalists have served Herr Hitler well; Dr. Schacht can retire with the knowledge that he has served as an excellent decoy. He was responsible for pulling Germany out of the slump, by utilising in the rearmament programme the huge stocks of raw materials and the reserves of capital equipment and unemployed labour bequeathed to Hitler by the world crisis. This first stage of the Nazi plan could only be successfully accomplished if Germany retained the confidence of the creditor Powers; and the Nazis were well content that the President of the Reichsbank should appear to be fighting their extremism, provided that he gained for them a necessary breathing space.

Through the diplomacy of Dr. Schacht Nazi rearmament began with the assent, almost with the approval, of foreign capitalists. Anxious to retrieve their frozen credits, they rejoiced to watch the wheels of industry go round, and did not inquire too curiously what that industry was producing. If ever they were disquieted by a speech of Mr. Churchill's, Dr. Schacht was always ready with the quiet assurance, "give the wild men a bit of rope; we have the situation in hand." And he could point to Captain Röhm's fate on June 30th, 1934, as proof of his power.

If the Moderates ever possessed any real power, it had evaporated in the spring of 1936, when, against their advice, Herr Hitler tore up the Treaty of Locarno. Since then in each crisis the impotence of the financiers and the army leaders has been increasingly shown. Their warnings have been unheeded, and Herr Hitler's daring has been justified by results. Nor has Dr. Schacht exercised any real check upon economic policy since that year. He has been constantly urging retrenchment and a return to normal business methods even at the cost of slowing up rearmament. His advice may have impressed Mr. Norman and Mr. Chamberlain, but it has had no effect on Herr Hitler and his advisers. In 1938, quite apart from their enormous budgeted expenditure, the Nazis spent three thousand million marks on the rearmament of the Rhineland, and two thousand million on the autumn mobilisation, while the total state expenditure exceeded 50 per cent. of the national income.

Now at last the moment has come when Herr Hitler does not need his decoy any longer. The murders of June 30th are expiated and the men who ordered the death of Röhm and the degradation of the S.A. are themselves dismissed. The disappearance of Dr. Schacht is signal proof that not only the army but industry and finance are now *gleichgeschaltet* in the Nazi war machine.

There are those in this country who still maintain that the Nazis are the victims of misfortune, innocents who should be helped out of their difficulties by those more fortunately situated. Such people point to the peace treaties, the loss of colonies or even the immediate difficulties of foreign trade as the causes of Germany's economic condition and of Nazi aggressiveness. These advocates of appeasement would do well to study the circumstances of Dr. Schacht's dismissal. The loss of exports, the diminution of German capital and the steady fall in the standard of living are due not to misfortune, but to a perfectly deliberate policy implacably pursued by the Nazi leadership. Last week Herr Hitler made the supreme decision. If he wished, he could have chosen to raise the standard of living at the cost of slowing up rearmament. He has not done so; not because he cannot, but because he hopes to win greater triumphs by more spectacular methods.

In the long run, as Dr. Funk must have told him, the present economic policy of Germany can only lead to a repetition of the 1923 inflation. But this fact does not worry him, because he is not concerned with the long run. His object is to amass the greatest possible striking power in the immediate future. He faces an adverse balance of trade, not because the world is against him, but because he has been importing and storing vast quantities of food and war material. He has decreed the confiscation of Jewish property and is prepared to confiscate Catholic property and any other property which is handy, although in so doing he exhausts the resources of his country, because this is the quickest method of maximising the Nazi military strength. And it should not be forgotten that his bloodless victories have earned some handsome dividends. The rape of Austria, even apart from the gains in raw materials, provided him with 120 million pounds in gold with which to finance imports; while Munich, partly thanks to our 10 million loan, has made it possible for him to put the Skoda works under Nazi-Czech control without paying a penny.

In saying *Schach* to Dr. Schacht, Herr Hitler has also checkmated the British advocates of appeasement. Their attempt to play off the Moderates against the pure Nazis has not only failed but has enormously strengthened the German war-machine; and years of manoeuvring have left Hitler in command of the board. It is useless to-day either to prophesy glibly the collapse of Nazi economics or to attempt to show them up. Hitler has refused the

middle way and staked everything upon an overwhelming victory. Long before the collapse comes (and there is still plenty of capital in Germany ready for confiscation) he will have scored his decisive victory—or been overthrown.

Unfortunately appeasement has made this second alternative highly improbable. In the last two years Hitler has laid intolerable burdens upon his subjects, and the fruits of one victory have been employed not to relieve those burdens but to prepare for the next advance. With every triumph it becomes clearer to the German nation that his policy is of benefit to none save those who bask in its glory. Had the British and the French Governments put their trust not in the Moderates who hoisted the Nazis to power, but in the real anti-Fascist forces in Germany, had they supported the cause of democracy in Czechoslovakia and in Spain, Herr Himmler and Herr von Ribbentrop would not be the representatives of German policy to-day.

Even Mr. Chamberlain has begun to realise the bitter fruits of Munich. Of this, his broadcast last Monday is sufficient proof. But we fear that he is still under the delusion that, if he cannot play off German Moderates against German extremists, he can still play one dictator against another. He does not yet see that since the Nazi victory at Munich Mussolini cannot sell himself to us even if he wished to—and anyhow we can no longer offer a sufficient price. The conquest of Spain will bind the Duce even more closely to his imperious German master.

So the Nazi revolution enters on its third, Napoleonic phase, and the fate of Europe will be determined by the Nazi Führer. East and west lie open to him, spacious avenues of aggression, and who can say which way his whim will take him? But advance he must, since delay means economic disaster. Those who would prophesy his course should turn to *Mein Kampf* which remains the oracle of Munich.

There they will find it written that the destruction of France is the prime task of regenerated Germany; and they will note this task is to be accomplished by persuading Great Britain that kinship and prudence alike demand the shelving of old friendships and loyal co-operation with our Nordic brothers. So speaks the oracle, and so far it has never spoken falsely.

SIR STAFFORD AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION

SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS' action in circulating his memorandum to the constituency Labour Parties was bound to precipitate a crisis. He is probably right in maintaining that, since he was elected to the Executive by the constituencies, he has a right to circulate his opinion to them; but this argument is by no means proven and it intensified the antagonism of the Trade Union leaders who saw in the memorandum an attempt to undermine their paramount influence in the party. There was little difficulty therefore in securing a majority on the Executive prepared to present Sir Stafford with an ultimatum. On Wednesday he was informed that, unless he withdrew the memorandum, he would be expelled. And he chose expulsion. Thereby the Labour Party has lost one of its ablest and most high-minded members, but it need no longer fear that Mr. Bevin and Mr. Marchbanks will withdraw their Trade Unions' financial support.

But the expulsion of Sir Stafford will not kill a movement which, in spite of incessant pressure from the top of the Trade Unions and the political Party, is steadily gaining ground among the constituency parties. The more prudent members of the National Executive realise that you can only kill the demand for unity by the annihilation of a considerable number of vigorous local parties.

The significance of the memorandum lies neither in the personality of its author nor even in the policy which it outlines. If the truth be told, neither its advocates nor its opponents are really concerned with the electoral programme of the party, and the argument that Sir Stafford is watering down the pure Socialism of the Short-Term Programme is taken seriously by nobody. The real issues at stake are two: in the first place, whom does the Party represent, and in the second place, what sort of Cabinet do we wish to see in power after the next General Election.

The National Executive is largely composed of men and women who have devoted their lives to building up an independent Labour Party. Their ideas moulded by pre-war conditions, they have worked to create a great Socialist political machine which should in due course succeed to power in this country. To achieve this, they have fought countless battles both against Communist on the left and Liberals on the right, and the collapse of the Liberal Party seemed to have brought them in 1929 within measurable distance of success. It is only natural that such people should view with the deepest suspicion a movement which seems to ask them to collaborate with life-long enemies and to surrender the objective for which the Labour Party was formed.

Where Sir Stafford differs from them is not only in his estimate of the international situation, but in his analysis of public opinion. Himself comparatively new to active politics, he has more sympathy both with the younger generation and also with the vast mass of non-political opinion, and he has been impressed by the growing distrust not only of the National Government but also of the Labour Party. To-day, there is not merely apathy but a good deal of positive hostility to all the old political parties; and this tendency is especially prevalent among young people. They are unable to understand the feuds between Liberal, Labour, and Communist politicians, because they have never known a time when the two-party system was working properly, and so do not hanker after a return to the "normalcy" which still haunts the minds of pre-war politicians. They have grown up in a world of permanent insecurity in which, as they see it, there are two sides—the Old Guard and themselves—and they find the Old Guard occupying key positions in all parties. The minority of young people who are politically conscious know that, unless their party is led by men and women who speak their language and sympathise with their ideas, they themselves can do little to convert the apathetic majority outside all parties; and it is because the National Executive has lost contact with them that they turn so eagerly to any movement which seems to offer an alternative to the old game of party politics. They are not searching simply for a new policy for the old party; they want a really democratic party-organisation—a leadership which can speak for them. Advocates of the popular front differ widely in the policies they propound, but they agree about the type of leadership they want, and at the moment the character of the leadership is more important than the programme it propounds.

This conflict of the generations, accentuated by the losses in the Great War, is common to all parties and it is paralleled by another conflict between north and south. The Labour Party outside London still has its chief parliamentary strength in the heavy industrial and textile areas. But the migration of Labour into the southern light industries and the distributive trades has been very great, and it has occurred without any appreciable change in the parliamentary representation or the leadership. Some of the most vigorous elements in the Labour Party have left the old Labour regions and occupations and now find themselves in areas where victory by the old-fashioned methods is impossible. And it is just in those areas which

must be won if the National Government is to be defeated that the Popular Front is strongest.

A third division in the Labour Movement is caused by the spread of secondary education. In the old days, the Party consisted of the workers plus a few middle-class supporters; now some of the oldest children of working-class origin have become black-coated workers with tastes and ideas very different from those of their parents. This new class does not easily find a home in the old Labour Movement and is often suspect to Trade Union and political leaders of the old type. The result is that it becomes either non-political or violently anti-Labour and seeks membership in the L.B.C. or the C.P. Too often the very people who should be the rising leaders of the Labour Party are forced into opposition or advocacy of the Popular Front.

These conflicts between youth and age, between North and South, and between the different educational classes, are the background of the movement for a popular front. They would have produced it without any international crisis, but the crisis has strengthened the movement by adding to it a large body of support from the older generation.

Besides conflict, however, there is a good deal of genuine misunderstanding. The Old Guard regard the Popular Front as an attempt to compel them to betray the independence of the party which they built. They see the issue in terms of political personalities, of Cabinet-making and of parliamentary organisation. But for the younger generation, too far from the Cabinet and the House to understand its procedure, it seems chiefly a matter of local action. For them unity of the progressive forces means, not a coalition with Liberal and Tory politicians, but a movement which will create out of its ranks a new leadership and bring some real democracy into the party machine.

The National Executive is fully justified when it points out the difference between local unity and electoral pacts on a national scale, and the difficulties of coalition government. Undoubtedly the Popular Fronters are vague about their intentions at Westminster, and it is a pity that on this point Sir Stafford Cripps did not give a clearer lead. Even a progressive unity throughout the country (which is unlikely) will be useless after the election, unless the politicians who have to do the work are united. And since the Popular Front does not propose to substitute an entirely new leadership but to persuade some of the existing leaders of its wisdom, it is essential that its supporters should look beyond local unity to the technical difficulties of inter-party collaboration at Westminster.

In spite of this, Sir Stafford has an overwhelming case. He speaks for hundreds of thousands of frustrated people inside and outside the party whose Socialism is as sincere as, though it may be different from, that of the Executive. Now this large—and not unimportant—minority has lost its leading representative in the councils of the Labour Party. Democratic discipline has demanded and obtained his expulsion. But you cannot dragoon a party into enthusiasm, or convince it of your Socialist fervour by threats of expulsion. To put it bluntly, many younger party members suspect that the Executive's "pure Socialism" means not the determination to achieve power, but the determination to wait until the millennium arrives according to pre-war rules. Those of us who grew up after the war cannot accept such a policy. We know that we are not living in a world which is evolving towards Socialism, and in which there is time to wait. That is why many of us, who often disagreed with Sir Stafford's tactics and opinions, feel that he is fundamentally on our side. He knows the urgency of the situation and realises that Labour cannot jog along to victory in the old traditional way. It may be tactically wise—by pre-war reckoning—to leave the responsibility for the mess to Mr. Chamberlain and reserve for Labour the pleasant position of a Socialist opposition for the next five years, but such tactics look to us like suicidal mania in the present international crisis.

That is why Spain has become the centre of Popular Front agitation and work. For years we have felt that no sacrifice of party advantage would be too great if it could achieve the rescue of Spanish democracy. There we see our own battle being fought, and for many of us the International Brigade has become *the* epic of the post-war Labour Movement. We cannot fight shy of it because it was chiefly organised by Communists; on the contrary, we respect the Communists for doing a job which the Second International should have done. Is it impossible for the Executive to understand this attitude, or to realise that those whom they dub disloyal are really devoted to the principles which they preach, and really perturbed by the course they are adopting?

To-day there are only two alternatives. The Labour Party itself might become a real Popular Front, speaking not only for certain industries but for the working people as a whole. This is what Sir Stafford obviously desires, but it will involve a drastic change in the discipline and organisation of the party. We need more freedom both of speech and of action within the party, and a leadership which obtains the support of the younger generation not by threats of expulsion, but by giving it a real lead. Instead of attacking the Popular Front, the Executive should try to harmonise its ideas with those of the older sections of the movement, and this could be achieved by granting a great deal more local autonomy. Since you cannot hold the north and win the south by the same methods, it is obviously wise to allow the constituency parties to vary their electoral tactics according to local conditions. If the Executive were to take this wise decision, it could perhaps repair the damage done this week and, though it might forgo the approval of the *Times*, it would win the gratitude of those upon whom the future of Socialism depends.

Otherwise, if the Executive refuses to take this line and prefers to come to heel whenever Mr. Bevin cracks his whip, not only will they ensure that Mr. Chamberlain remains in power, but they will prepare the ground for the Fascist leader of the future. A narrow and sectarian Labour Party will increase the distrust of party politics and alienate the youth of the nation not only from the Labour Party but from democracy. The Executive has decided that it can lead the party better without Sir Stafford. But his expulsion settles nothing. On the contrary, it imposes a still heavier burden of responsibility upon those who think they can do without him.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

WOMEN AND CHILDREN LAST

IT was over a year since I had last been in Barcelona and, bad as conditions had been then, the change is startling. It is not only the closed shops and the ruin and desolation of the lower part of the city that must strike the least observant, but the pinched, lined faces of the adults and the grey-white pallor and puffed eyelids one sees only too often amongst the crowds of children outside the canteens, or standing around the Heinkel plane exposed to view in the Paseo de Gracia. There is no panic, but a pervading sense of weariness and fatalism.

A Basque whom I had known previously as a stout, hearty man in a good position now had his clothes hanging on him and remarked smilingly that the war was a liberal education as it had taught him you could be constantly cold in bright sunshine and feel tired before the day's work had started, though at the end of a long day he insisted on walking eight miles to show me my way back at night. A youngster on whom I did a rough test showed a haemoglobin of less than 40 per cent. In spite of this and the constant raids, the life of the city goes on, and it is impossible to speak too highly of the way in which the Government and the various relief organisations are carrying out the distribution of what food there is and the feeding of the destitute. The International Commission and the Society of Friends are distributing bread made from American wheat to 93,000 schoolchildren in Barcelona alone, whilst the canteens in many of the villages throughout Catalunya give one meal a day to children between

2 and 5 (and to older children when bread is not available), consisting of cocoa and biscuits made from flour, peanut oil and skimmed milk. As far as possible, children are being taken from the " refugios " and cared for in children's colonies, and in those which are being subsidised from outside sources (such as the English " Foster Parent " scheme, the Birmingham colonies, and those supported by the National Joint Committee for Spanish relief) it is good to find children who look well and cheerful, carrying on with classes or doing manual work. Unfortunately these represent only a small proportion of all children, and a proportion which is rapidly becoming less. Those most stricken, however, are the infants too young to eat bread, and in the past two weeks the ration for these was reduced to 250 grams of dried skimmed milk and 100 grams of sugar a week. Seeing the children in the clinics and canteens also fails to show the worst cases, since not only are the children attending the lucky ones but the incidence of illness is almost unbelievably high. Thus in one canteen alone I found that although there were 466 on the books, 175 were too ill to attend, and that the mothers had come with a medical certificate to fetch their rations.

With the rapid nationalist advance, overwhelming difficulties in food distribution have arisen. The mobilisation of drivers and the continual emergency calls for lorries to evacuate children from bombed villages come at a time when every road to the south and west of Barcelona is filled with a steady stream of refugees from the surrounding villages. Farm carts loaded with household gear—mattresses, saucepans, parts of a dismembered bicycle, a very occasional live hen or rabbit (on one gypsy handcart I even saw a tame baboon), with children everywhere—pass along amongst the ambulances and lorries and marching troops. In Villafranca the main square was crowded with resting refugees, and the canteen had given bread and cocoa in one day to over 800 women and young children alone. Whilst we were there, the church bell tolled and before more than a fraction of the population could reach the underground " refugio " or do more than step inside a doorway, the first bomb had fallen. The bombing of a village is more harrowing for those in it than a raid on a large town. There is no anti-aircraft defence whatever, and life seems the sport of the raiders for as long as they may wish. We had stepped into a shop, where were an old lady, her daughter, and a wisp of a child, Anita, an orphan from Madrid. The first explosion was followed almost at once by the long whistle (how long that whistle seems as you wait for the explosion !) and thud of the second bomb, obviously nearer. The third and fourth were nearer still. By then we had got Anita wrapped in a mattress under the counter, and stood away from the windows in the centre of the room. The fifth explosion shook the whole house, broke the windows, and blew open the door (doors and windows being left ajar during a raid). The next fell farther off, and we listened to the sound of the engines growing fainter, and then louder again as the planes circled back. Six more bombs were dropped, and then followed a long silence. Anita wriggled out of her mattress, and was with difficulty prevented from running into the street. Then suddenly there was a roar of engines just above the housetops, and the rattle of machine-gun fire. Up and down the streets went the planes, machine-gunning to right and left. The old lady told me she was descended from a soldier in Wellington's army (her name was spelt Hill and pronounced " Eel "), and how the refugee women from the south were undermining the morals of the village (" We Catalans have very liberal ideas but very strict practice ! "). At last a long silence during which shutters were cautiously opened, and Anita ran out to compare notes with her ten-year-old novio next door. We drove on to Villanova, listening to the pounding of the artillery along the nearby front, and reached the hospital to find there had been a raid just before the one we had experienced. The councillor we asked for was busy supervising the immediate burial of the dead, and the more seriously wounded had already been admitted, although the wards were already full from those of the previous two days. We were shown round by the matron, a kindly capable old nun (who had continued with most of her original personnel nursing throughout each change of government). In addition to her hospital work, terribly handicapped for lack of antiseptics, dressings and anaesthetics, she was responsible for the canteen for children under five. They were beginning to arrive, and the old lady showed us her " guapitas " drinking their cocoa with the pride of a gardener amongst her roses. Stuffing a recalcitrant piece of biscuit into an eager three-year-old mouth in passing, she picked up her especial favourite Conchita, whose nose had been torn open by a bomb, but thanks to the grace of God (and not a little, I thought, to the skill of the surgeon) had healed so beautifully.

Coming back along the Sitges road, we were given timely warning by a litter of strewn paper of a crater in the road ten feet across where a bomb had fallen clean on a lorry carrying newspapers. Sitges itself was practically empty. We had been out two nights previously evacuating the children from the " Foster Parent " colonies after it had been heavily bombed. One five-year-old had told me with a truly Basque bravado that he had already been evacuated three times from in front of an advancing army—from San Sebastian, Bilbao, and now again. " You Donostiarra are always seeing life," I said to him, and thought it was not a very long cry to seeing death as well.

We got back to Friends House in Sarria to find that ninety children had just arrived from Manresa, which had been bombed and machine-gunned, and where they had been collected from hiding in the fields. One little boy too ill to walk had been half dragged, half carried to safety in a ditch. He was taken down to the English Hospital and the others, after biscuits and hot milk, had soon recovered their spirits. Only one little girl was crying, and after a little persuasion admitted that it was because she had wet her knickers on the long cold drive. They set off singing on their journey to Gerona, where I visited them two days later to find them camped in an old barrack of a house, without water, light, or beds.

When I left Barcelona on Saturday, one of the van boys, a wizened little creature with the face of a humorous monkey, told me he was fifteen that day. " Muchos años (many years)," I said. " Thanks, but I'll be lucky if I get one," he answered with a grin and a shrug. " I must admit I'd sooner see it end with a pen dipped in ink than a bayonet dipped in guts. Esta guerra—es una leche ! "

RICHARD ELLIS

A LONDON DIARY

HISTORY will not forgive France and Britain for their part in the destruction of Spanish democracy. Wickedness often goes unpunished, but vacillation and stupidity never. It must be remembered that no help could have been sent to Franco by sea except with the consent of the British and French navies, and that the Spanish army in Catalonia has been defeated, not by Spaniards, but by German and Italian aeroplanes, artillery and tanks ; that the blockade of Valencia and Catalonia, like that of the Basque country, has been carried out with the co-operation of the British Government, and most terrible of all that the policy of one-sided intervention has been maintained while a Popular Front Government has been in power in France. That is the most cruel and devastating thought. Pressure from the conservative British Government is no sufficient excuse, nor is the threat, which has really been the decisive factor, that help for the Spanish Government would be opposed, possibly even to the point of civil war, by the French Right. Because the French Left has been intimidated by its enemies, it may soon have to face a choice between a lonely and desperate fight and the fate of the Left in Germany.

* * *

Franco's tactics, it is understood, will be to consolidate his position in the North, leaving Madrid to starve, and endeavouring to cut communications between France and Spain.

It is calculated that this should make the moment ripe for further pressure on France and Britain in about three weeks' time. Since Schacht's dismissal, all the pundits agree that the Nazi extremists are now completely dominant in Germany and that the Axis will press hard while it still possesses its immense superiority in the air. No one can be sure of the next move, but all the indications suggest pressure in the West. Preparations for the Nazi penetration of the East are not yet complete. The road to the Ukraine, which is being built at top speed, will not be ready for some months, while the psychological preparations for an "independent Ukraine" may take longer still. That adventure may also involve war with Russia, for which the experts say the German army is not yet prepared. Hitler does not intend to quarrel with Poland, but, with Colonel Beck maintained in office, to force Poland along with him when the time comes. He seems to have promised to get colonies for Poland when he demands the return of Germany's colonial empire. In the meantime, Mussolini, who got nothing out of Munich, is to have part at least of the French Empire, and that fits in well with Hitler's determination to dominate the West. All these considerations give point to the persistent reports that Germany will begin on February 15th to mobilise troops on the Dutch frontier. Some think that Hitler intends to establish a mastery over Holland, which is as good a base as Belgium if the object is to terrorise Britain and which would give him control over the Rhine. (The Rhine is, after all, a German river. If it is against the natural order for German blood to be under foreign rule, why not German water as well?) Others think that Hitler means to finish off the West at once, since the gap between British and German strength will be greatly lessened by 1940. In that case, it is suggested, he would follow the apostles of the "lightning war" and proceed very soon to bomb London on an enormous scale. His more likely policy, in my view, is to use the threat in the West as a way of holding off Britain while he supports Italy against France. France, and perhaps Britain also, would be asked to give up colonies; and France would be told to turn out her refugees and suppress all Left parties on the Czech model. With Italian troops and aeroplanes on the Pyrenees and M. Bonnet in office in France and Mr. Chamberlain in Britain, Hitler and Mussolini might well hope to pull this off without general war. France might be another Czechoslovakia or another Spain. These are all possibilities, though they sound like nightmares. One other possibility is that Hitler will not consider the time ripe and that nothing very spectacular will happen for some months. This I regard as not at all probable.

* * *

In the present world war, armaments, as Captain Liddell Hart pointed out long ago, are a question of tactics, while policy in Czechoslovakia and Spain were questions of strategy. Britain and France has now given up almost all strategical positions and in so doing has also lost two great popular armies which were ready to fight on their side. When I think of that wanton slaughter of our friends in Spain, I listen with nausea to Mr. Chamberlain calling upon us to join up in "defence of democracy." If we are really going to attempt even now to defend democracy, we need a great deal more than a scheme of voluntary defence. Things have now reached such a pass that it is not clear how far defence is possible, and though it is certain that man power is important, a great many other things seem even more urgent. For instance, we need allies—which means, what Mr. Chamberlain has elaborately discarded, an alliance with the U.S.S.R., which alone can draw off Hitler's forces to the East. Then we need the U.S.A. on our side and our policy in Spain, as a telegram signed by many influential Americans reminds us, is rapidly driving the United States into contemptuous isolation. We need anti-aircraft guns—and I doubt if the scandal of last September is yet remedied. We need proper direction for air development; the public will obtain in the course of the next few weeks some notion of the fantastic inefficiency and waste in our present service departments. We need an intensive agricultural policy and food storage; we need a colonial policy which would make friends of subject races who, as things stand, may naturally regard our difficulty as their opportunity. A genuine national effort would, of course, also demand some form of national service, but to ask for it while these other far greater and immediate necessities are lacking seems almost irrelevent. In view of the attitude of our rulers and of our incredible inefficiency I regard war in the next months as unlikely. It will only come if Hitler has decided on it in any case. Our rulers are fighting a class, not a national, war. Now and then one gets some glimpse of their real mentality. I see, for instance, that Countess Winterton, speaking at the Worthing Women's Conservative Club the other day, remarked:

> I am also very much annoyed by those people who have come back from fighting in Spain and are making a nuisance of themselves with coffins and by chaining themselves to railings. I am sorry they did not get themselves shot in Spain.

* * *

A few weeks ago a non-Aryan German, who had maintained a position in Germany, received a summons to go to the police station. He went expecting some new tax, but was promptly arrested and sent to a concentration camp. His wife, who knew nothing of the arrest, was surprised when her house was invaded by a squad of Storm Troopers. She was turned out of the house and guarded by armed men, while her furniture, personal belongings and indeed the whole contents of her house were thrown from the windows into the road and burnt before her eyes. The man in charge of the squad had been a friend and the schoolmaster of her children. As a last protest she said that she hoped he would leave some blankets to cover the children at night, but the wreck of her flat was complete, and in order to make it uninhabitable the windows were broken. Later, the leader of the Storm Troopers sought her out privately and expressed bitter regret for what he had had to do. He explained that he was a great deal suspect in the Party and that this job had been particularly chosen for him because he was known to be a friend of the family. If he had not stood the test and carried out his orders wholeheartedly, he would himself have been sent to a concentration camp. I choose this story out of the many that reach my ears because I have proof of its precise authenticity, because it is typical and because the man and woman involved had friends in other countries who have since managed to obtain their release from Germany. The friend who gave me these details has only recently returned from Germany, and saw a great deal of some of the young Nazis. In public they were all full of the usual Nazi doctrines and expressed fervent admiration for Hitler. When he got to know some of them well, however, they told him privately that they had originally joined the S.A. in the belief that something decent was being done for Germany, that they had become completely disillusioned and disgusted with what they were doing, but that sadists and gangsters were in charge and they had no alternative but to obey orders. One of the things most worth remembering is that there are still in Germany innumerable decent people who in their hearts loathe the regime and who pray for outside resistance to Hitler before it is too late.

* * *

A correspondent sends me the following poem called "A Foreign Ruler," written by Walter Savage Landor, and first published in 1863:

> He says, "My reign is peace," so slays
> A thousand in the dead of night.
> "Are you all happy now?" he says,
> And those he leaves behind cry "Quite."
> He swears he will have no contention,
> And sets all nations by the ears;
> He shouts aloud, "No intervention!"
> Invades, and drowns them all in tears.

I have failed so far to find out on exactly which occasion Landor wrote this. It might apply to Napoleon III or the Austrian Emperor. It is topical enough anyway. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to "Solon."

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

The Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain's authentic and copyright book of speeches *In Search of Peace* specially authorised by the Prime Minister and only available to old and new members of The National Book Association. The National Book Association was founded in 1937 to give its members important new books that have a sound, moderate and non-revolutionary aspect.—N.B.—The next choice is Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.—Advt. in *Daily Telegraph*.

May I suggest that the present warbling note of warning of air raids is a depressing and miserable one, and that a more inspiring one, i.e., the old "prepare to receive cavalry," or even "the charge," be substituted?—Letter in the *Times*.

It is being pumped into the people that war is coming in the spring. It is amazing that the public should fall for such nonsense. Would our King and Queen be preparing to slip away to Canada and America leaving their beautiful children behind to be gassed, bombed and massacred as the civil defence would make the public believe by this "putting the fear of God into it"? The idea is monstrous, wicked, ignorant and senseless!—Letter in *Brighton and Hove Herald*.

Lord Sandhurst in replying to a toast of the Houses of Parliament said the House of Lords was "the finest body of men on any subject." It could always produce the necessary expert. He found, though, a disinclination among the Lords to vote in their own propertied interests. He himself, he said, tried to persuade them that in voting in their own interests they would be voting in the interests of the country.—*Manchester Guardian*.

THE NORDIC NOSE. Conceded by the cultured and artistic to be the nose without flaw. Seen in profile, its delicate refined lines express distinction—Advt. in *The Bystander*.

DEMOCRACY AND EFFICIENCY

Kingsley Martin.—You have long held that private capitalism is an out-of-date institution incapable of meeting the requirements of the twentieth century. Its failure at present in England is terrifyingly obvious. A couple of million unemployed is sufficient proof in itself. We have spent hundreds of millions of pounds on rearmament, yet everyone agrees that the results have been ludicrously disproportionate; if another great international crisis arises in the next few months I suppose we shall be told that we are still too weak to stand up for ourselves or for anything we value. In this series of conversations Mr. Herbert Morrison, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George have all argued, I think convincingly, that this fantastic inefficiency is not due to any faults inherent in democratic institutions. They have spoken mainly of the lack of leadership, and Mr. Morrison argued, as I should, that it is primarily due to the contradictions of an out-of-date economic system which puts profits before national needs. It is on this last point that I should particularly like your opinion.

J. M. Keynes.—That the delinquencies of the present Government are in the interests of profit-making strikes me as an odd idea. Surely that is a parrot-phrase in this context. But that we are suffering from the contradictions of an out-of-date economic system I agree entirely. In contemporary conditions we need, if we are to enjoy prosperity and profits, so much more central planning than we have at present that the reform of the economic system needs as much urgent attention if we have war as if we avoid it. The intensification of the trade cycle and the increasingly chronic character of unemployment have shown that private capitalism was already in its decline as a means of solving the economic problem. But the breakdown of international good faith and the constant threats to peace are making it still more obvious that, quite apart from war, we have to move a long distance along that very road which actual war would make it imperative for us to take. Arnold Toynbee pointed out the other day that it is impossible to carry on the sort of organisation, to which we have been accustomed, in an atmosphere of complete uncertainty as to the future when we feel that a knife may at any moment cut every activity. But it is not the threat which the necessary measures might offer to personal liberty and democratic institutions which stands in the way of what wants doing to make us prosperous within and safe without. Any such threat is so remote from the first and the next and the next things that want doing, that it is not now, and is a long way from being, a practical issue.

K. M.—When the reorganisation we need is so desperately obvious, what is it, in your view, that holds us back? What are the obstacles?

J. M. K.—Well, first of all, there is a lukewarmness on the part of the public opinion which is organised towards the particular amalgam of private capitalism and State Socialism which is the only practicable recipe for present conditions. This recipe is not in tune with the inherited slogans of either side. Most politicians are committed either to the view that private capitalism works very well as it is, or to the view that it should be got rid of altogether. From the days when I served on the Liberal Industrial Enquiry, I have felt that there was too little organised sympathy for attempts to make the private property system *work better*. Your thinking it necessary just now to make that remark about profit-making is a good example of what I have in mind. Yet I am ever more convinced that there was deep wisdom in those seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers who discovered and preached a profound connection between personal and political liberty and the rights of private property and private enterprise. The fact that the lawyers of the eighteenth century perniciously twisted this into the sanctity of vested interests and large fortunes should not blind us to the truth which lies behind. As Count Kalergi has recently reminded us, "in all ages private property has been an essential element in liberalism, a bulwark of personality against the omnipotence of the State and a stimulus to seek comfort and culture," and it was recognised in the French Revolution by the 17th paragraph of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* as "an inviolable and sacred right." It is because of the dispute over the principle of private property that freedom's front to-day has broken up. Yet it is only on lines of liberalism that there can be a peaceful, non-violent evolution of social and economic institutions.

K. M.—The right of private property that was historically associated with liberty in the period before the French Revolution referred to the right of the peasant proprietor to own the fruits of his own labour and of the man who invented a new process or ran a small business to make a profit out of it. But the ghosts of political theories are very erratic in their habits of walking, and I know of no more extraordinary confusion than that which identifies this right to own the fruits of one's own labour in pre-industrial society with the right of Mr. Rockefeller or the Duke of Westminster to own the labour and control the conditions of life of thousands of other people. Surely the monopoly ownership of our day is one of the great enemies of liberty. But I agree that the right of *personal* property is inseparable from the conception of liberty, and that this confusion between personal property, which no intelligent Socialist has ever wished to take away from anyone, and property in the sense of the right to play the money market, and employ, sack or pay what wages one likes, has had very serious results. In any case there is no very early prospect of getting a complete socialism, so that an understanding of the "middle way" you speak of becomes urgently important. You say that there is a lack of organised sympathy for it. Do you mean that Britain is sharply and irrevocably divided between the two extreme views?

J. M. K.—Quite the contrary. I believe that the real convictions of at least three-quarters of the country to-day are, in the most fundamental and genuine meaning of the word,

liberal. Indeed, it is this which explains the unreality of contemporary party politics. Most of the Conservative Party and most of the Labour Party are liberals; yet this is the one shade of opinion which lacks organised expression. Mr. Lloyd George is a good enough liberal himself. But of the two dark deeds of his career, the Treaty of Versailles and the slaughter of organised liberalism, we are suffering to-day as much from the second as from the first. Mr. Churchill, Sir Archibald Sinclair, and Mr. Herbert Morrison are politicians very representative of popular opinion to-day. And where could you find a finer trio of typical liberals? The real obstacle lies in our not having a Government of that complexion. Or take some others, not quite so near the centre of gravity—Mr. Walter Elliot, Mr. Eden, Mr. Attlee, Lord Cecil, the Archbishop of York, the Duchess of Atholl, Prof. Laski, Mr. Harold Nicolson, Mr. H. G. Wells, Sir Arthur Salter, Mr. A. P. Herbert, Commander Stephen King-Hall, yourself, Mr. G. D. H. Cole, Lord Stamp, Mr. Maxton, Mr. Bevin, Sir Walter Citrine, Mr. Dalton, Mr. Noel-Baker, and I could go on until I had mentioned everyone in public life outside G. B. S., a dozen Tories and National Liberals (not all of them in the Cabinet), a dozen leaders of big business and perhaps a dozen agitators (though I cannot remember their names)—what are any of you but excellent liberals? There is no one in politics to-day worth sixpence outside the ranks of liberals except the post-war generation of intellectual Communists under thirty-five. Them, too, I like and respect. Perhaps in their feelings and instincts they are the nearest thing we now have to the typical nervous nonconformist English gentleman who went to the Crusades, made the Reformation, fought the Great Rebellion, won us our civil and religious liberties and humanised the working classes last century.

K. M.—You have started a very pretty hare there by calling me and all these other people liberals; but if you mean that most people in Britain still maintain a preference for social change with the minimum of violence, that they cling to certain standards of decency and are not always opposed to compromise, you are, of course, perfectly right. But many Communists really agree on these points and some of those whom you call liberals are deeply affected by Marxian philosophy. The greatest practical difference I notice between the generations is that the under thirty-fives are uninhibited by experience of the last war and the last peace. In any case the situation is hopeless unless the two elements that you have called Liberal and Communist can work together. That is why I find myself so dismayed by the attitude of the official Labour Party to-day.

J. M. K.—Yes; the attitude of the official Labour Party towards all this strikes me as one of the silliest things in the history of British politics. Why cannot they face the fact that they are not sectaries of an outworn creed mumbling moss-grown demi-semi Fabian Marxism, but the heirs of eternal liberalism, whose sincere convictions reflect and should inspire those of the great majority of their countrymen? Mr. Herbert Morrison gave out splendid doctrine in his interview with you the other day, and his manifesto in the current number of the *Political Quarterly* is magnificent. But the official utterances which are concocted when he gets together with his friends are pathetic. I sympathise with Mr. Bevin in fighting shy of contact with the professional Communists, regarding their body as a Trojan horse and their overtures in doubtful faith. But I should risk the contact all the same, so as not to lose touch with the splendid material of the young amateur Communists. For with them in their ultimate maturity lies the future, and not with the old jossers whose names I have been mentioning. I am all for Sir Stafford Cripps, and I would join his movement if he is successful in getting it launched; but I should like the movement all the better if Mr. Herbert Morrison and the others would join it too. How foolish, too, to decry the Left Book Club! It surely is one of the finest and most living movements of our time. If the official Labour Party reject the notion that they are the heirs of eternal liberalism (which, of course, they are, if they are anything at all), that is all the greater reason why they should be something more than an alms-house for retired agitators.

K. M.—Yes. The regular party leaders seem to regard all vitality as heresy, and, like the Social Democrats in some countries (which now put their Social Democrats into concentration camps), they seem intent rather on fighting their own Left than on providing an alternative to the capitalist Governments they are supposed to be opposing.

J. M. K.—You have put your finger on the spot when you compare the official Labour leaders to the defunct Social Democrats of the Continent. That is the path to Hades they are walking unless they pull themselves up. But perhaps we are wandering from our main thread; though not, I think, as far as might seem on the surface. Shall I pass on to the other main obstacle in the way of the necessary action? I find it in the fact that the present heads of our Civil Service were brought up in, and for the most part still adhere to, the *laisser faire* tradition. For constructive planning the Civil Servants are, of course, much more important than Ministers; little that is worth doing can be done without their assistance and good will. There has been nothing finer in its way than our nineteenth-century school of Treasury officials. Nothing better has ever been devised, if our object is to limit the functions of government to the least possible and to make sure that expenditure, whether on social or economic or military or general administrative purposes, is the smallest and most economical that public opinion will put up with. But if that is not our object, then nothing can be worse. The Civil Service is ruled to-day by the Treasury school, trained by tradition and experience and native skill to every form of intelligent obstruction. And there is another reason for the heads of the Service being what they are. We have experienced in the twelve years since the war two occasions of terrific retrenchment and axing of constructive schemes. This has not only been a crushing discouragement for all who are capable of constructive projects, but it has inevitably led to the survival and promotion of those to whom negative measures are natural and sympathetic. It has been a case of the survival of those who are particularly fit for retrenchment and retreat, and who are, therefore, unfit for energetic expansion. Great as is my admiration for many of the qualities of our Civil Service, I am afraid that they are becoming a heavy handicap in our struggle with the totalitarian States and in making ourselves safe from them. They cramp our energy, and spoil or discard our ideas.

K. M.—Quite so. Our Civil Servants, like our politicians, have a good tradition and habits of decency, but are at a loss to adjust themselves to the appalling speed of new developments. They just go ca' canny like tortoises and hide under their shells. It is partly, I think, a question of age. One result of losing a war is that you lose the older generation; to-day in Britain few people in authority are under 60, and in Germany few over 40.

J. M. K.—Is my line of thought now clearer? The idea that we cannot do what seems necessary without endangering our personal liberties and democratic institutions is a bogy. The obstacle lies not here, but in our rulers—first of all in the personnel of the Cabinet, and secondly in the personnel of the heads of the Civil Service. They spend their time, not in forging chains for us—far from it—but in finding plausible reasons for not doing things which public opinion almost overwhelmingly demands.

K. M.—Yes, that is quite clear, though I think you attribute too much to the deficiencies of personnel and too little to the "contradictions" of our economic system. To me the situation is unintelligible except on the basis of a class analysis. Our ruling classes are, above all, afraid of losing power; as long as the Reds are defeated they are content to sell us all into slavery. It is almost incredible, but many of them are still more afraid of Soviet Russia than Nazi Germany. It is not very comforting to think that they will be destroyed in a war, because so much else will be destroyed at the same time.

J. M. K.—If, indeed, it ever comes to war, this lack of preparation may prove disastrous. Our mere survival will then require that constructive ideas and energetic action shall take charge, even though too late. We shall not pass through the slow evolution of the late war, but shall leap at once to something at least as drastic as the system of 1918. One sometimes forgets how slow the transition was last time from *laisser faire* to control. I spent part of my time in 1915 on the earliest scheme for the State purchase and importation of wheat. We had no compulsory powers whatever, not even in engaging shipping freight. All we could do was to put on our best manners and engage the good offices and assistance of private trade. For most of that year there was a nearly complete freedom of dealing over the foreign exchanges. The voluntary system in almost every field survived more than a year of warfare. The controls in force in 1918 were built up tentatively and by slow degrees. No such period of gestation and experiment will be allowed us next time. Yet our plans and preparations are ludicrously feeble.

K. M.—Just so; but how do *you* account for the apparent complacency of our rulers?

J. M. K.—J. B. Priestley said the other day that "we have at present a rich-tired-old-man Government, the worst we have had since that of Lord North which lost us the American colonies." The second part of this is very plausible. But I doubt if being rich and tired and old, though true, is all the explanation. One underestimates, I think, the extraordinary out-of-dateness of mind of men like the Prime Minister or Sir Thomas Inskip or Sir John Simon. They live faithfully according to their lights, but they are blind to what seem to others the most obvious aspects of the contemporary world. These simply do not reach them. In the case of the Prime Minister this blindness is an essential element in his strength. If he could see even a little, if he became even faintly cognisant of the turmoil of ideas and projects and schemes to save the country which are tormenting the rest of us, his superbly brazen self-confidence would be fatally impaired.

K. M.—I doubt if anything would impair it, but what puzzles me most of all about him is his complacency as a business man. If he regards himself rather as the head of a great capitalist State, why doesn't fear of bankruptcy keep him awake at night?

J. M. K.—And there is one very elementary point, the ignoring of which is the most difficult of all to understand. Something like 10 per cent. of our productive resources are at present unused. How can it weaken or impoverish us to employ these resources, even if we fail to do so with full efficiency? To take the simplest illustration—the use of the unemployed miners and others to dig underground shelters and exits. Not to do this and the like appears the very delirium of insanity. Yet to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to the Treasury, brought up to apply the principles of private housekeeping to the State, this is an extravagance, a costly and perhaps insufficiently considered measure. What *I* think will *employ* our resources, *they* think will *exhaust* them—as though the labour of the unemployed could keep. This puts in two words the different attitudes.

K. M.—Does it come to this then? Because democracy has failed to do the things that you are wanting our democracy to do, the totalitarian States have found a rough-and-ready way for using their national resources for a national purpose. Unfortunately that purpose is war, and in the process of reorganising capitalism the totalitarian method has wiped out liberty, decency and indeed almost everything that makes life worth living. That they were ever able to do this is due to the failure of democracy to make these absolutely essential economic changes. In other words, we in Britain are doomed unless we can make the essential changes quickly and without these unnecessary and appalling sacrifices.

J. M. K.—Yes. That is the truth. The totalitarian States have shown us clearly enough that the central mobilisation of resources and the regimentation of the individual can be carried to a point which threatens the elements of personal liberty. I do not deny that. I say that we are so far from such a situation that the risk does not now exist. Nor is the real controversy about this. The question is whether we are prepared to move out of the nineteenth-century *laisser faire* state into an era of liberal socialism, by which I mean a system where we can act as an organised community for common purposes and to promote social and economic justice, whilst respecting and protecting the individual—his freedom of choice, his faith, his mind and its expression, his enterprise and his property.

ON HAVING A SLIGHT CHILL

THERE are compensations for having a slight chill. The worst part of it is, perhaps, that one suddenly realises how full the world is of draughts. Even if one sits in a taxi with closed windows, draughts somehow creep in like malignant spirits, as inescapable as insects in an infested lodging-house. One feels them along the arms, along the spine, at the base of the skull. One knows that one ought to be warm with such a weight of clothes on one's body, but one discovers, as if for the first time, that clothes are no protection against draughts. It is the same in the house. Shut every window and pile the coal high on the fire, yet the room remains a miniature cave of Aeolus. One gets up to make sure that a window is not open; one draws the curtains tighter; one sits closer to the fire; yet down the back of one's armchair steals the malice of the draught, one of a multitude of invisible imps of whose existence, if one were not in a state of acute sensitivity, one would not be aware.

This is not agreeable, but at least it ultimately forces one to stay in bed and enables one to lie there all day with a good conscience. Aesthetes maintain that it is more enjoyable to lie in bed all day when one is perfectly well; but those of us who were brought up in the puritan tradition cannot remain comfortably in bed after lunch-time without the justification of the thermometer. A slight rise in temperature is proved, and all causes of self-reproach vanish. Two white tablets in water, a packet or two of cigarettes at the bedside, and a book; and there is nothing to complain of except that even in the bedroom the glass of the windows seems to be porous and that the hot air of the room, instead of becoming soothingly stagnant, is continually set in motion by puckish draughts the existence of which is inexplicable on any rational basis. Even I, who am normally an advocate of fresh air, a defender of draughts, a champion of the ever-open window, begin to long for the hermetically sealed room. I doubt, however, whether even that would be a protection, for draughts are obviously subjective.

As the white tablets do their work, indeed, the draughts gradually subside, and languorous reading becomes a pleasure. I do not mean by this that a man with a slight chill reads languorous literature, such as the lyrics of Dowson, but that he is in a mood to enjoy languorously reading stories of violent deeds—of full-blooded, red-blooded men doing all sorts of horrible things to each other in a very Utopia of violence. The boy, even when in the best of health, can enjoy a penny dreadful at any hour of the day. But I fancy the adult gets the best out of a wildly sensational story only when he reads it in bed at an hour at which he should be working. I certainly, who am not a devotee of Wild-Western gunmanship, preferring the urban excitements of Edgar Wallace, found life in bed in the afternoon made extraordinarily cheerful by Mr. Claude Rister's *Gunsmoke McGonigle*. The very title has a brightening effect on the heart when one is semi-prostrate. Probably there are plenty of other cowboy stories rather like it, but I have never known better company for an invalid than this daring young shooter, Gunsmoke McGonigle. Moralists might condemn him on the ground that, ever since the age of fourteen, he had lived for revenge. His father and his uncle—"silvery-haired Mort McGonigle"—had both been murdered by members of the Hammer family; and Gun-

smoke (otherwise Terry) had fled to another State in order to prepare to hammer the Hammers. Lying in bed with a slight temperature, however, one rather approves of revenge in the more distant parts of the United States, and I confess my most ardent hopes were concentrated on Gunsmoke's learning to draw quick and shoot straight. He had certainly done so by the time he returned to Texton, the centre of the Hammer country, and strolled into the Crazy Horse Saloon with Old Luke Kaley, his philosophic, tobacco-chewing companion.

Here one begins to feel acutely apprehensive that his hot temper may result in his being killed before he has killed the Hammers, for in the saloon he hears a blackguard making a gross remark about a girl he had known as a child. Gunsmoke is no giant—he weighs only a hundred and sixty pounds—but naturally he goes up to the gunman and twists his "steel-spring fingers" into the man's unbuttoned collar:

> His words seemed to pop from his lips as he said:
> "Fella, I ain't used to hearing smutty remarks passed about a clean young lady like that. Eat your dirty words, or I'll slam them right down your throat, and some teeth along with them."

There, surely you have speech on the heroic level—speech that some Fellow of All Souls might be profitably employed in translating into Homeric hexemeters. Homer, too, might not have disdained to describe the fight that followed:

> The scoundrel blinked in amazement, and then his heavy face went dark-red in anger. With a snarl he tore the hand from his collar and struck. McGonigle's move was as quick as that of an alert bobcat as he side-stepped. The blow slid harmlessly over his right shoulder. He chugged out his right fist in a blow that travelled only a few inches. It smashed against the man's loose lips and sent him staggering back over worn bootheels. The next instant the two men were mixing it in a furious slug-feast.

Is it only the result of a slight temperature, or am I right in thinking that that phrase—"sent him staggering back over worn bootheels"—is a stroke of perfect art?

Unlike Browning, I was never a fighter, but, lying in bed, I found this slug-feast most exhilarating. How good the phrases are! "The lithe young puncher fought like a buzz-saw." "He smashed a blow to the nose, bringing a gushing flow of crimson. The man snorted a red spray, roared in anger, ducked his head and charged." Nor does the excellent fighting cease when Tesro, the scoundrel, has been forced to eat his words and to leave the saloon, "wiping blood and muttering between swollen lips." For the landlord, Dick Brandon, intervened and wanted to know who Gunsmoke and the "long-legged maverick" with him were, "to come here and try to run this town."

> Smoke's thin lips twisted in a sneering grin. Mockingly he said: "That long-legged jasper is one of the old she-cougar's brothers. Me, I'm the wolf with the wire tail." Then the lips went flat, the mouth took on a mean droop and he added between set teeth: "Keep your nose out of my business, hombre, or it might get caved in."

Does it not become clearer and clearer as one reads on that the cowboy story is the true successor to the *Iliad*—that, indeed, cowboy fiction is the *Iliad* of democracy. Great speech and great action are nobly intermingled, and how fine is the situation when Duke Brandon, having struck Gunsmoke, himself receives one on the chin:

> It was a short blow, but it sent Brandon stumbling back. The haughty immaculate dive-owner ordinarily was distinctly averse to fist-fighting, considering it beneath his dignity. It had been a wild flare of temper which had caused him to swing that one blow. Now, with hell flaring in his black eyes, he spat: "Damn you, cowboy, draw!"

Some goddess was fighting on Gunsmoke's side, however, for "a cat-like leap, and Gunsmoke McGonigle was boring the saloon-man's belly with the muzzle of a very short Colt. How that gun had got into the brown fist was a mystery to some of the onlookers. They had not seen the hand move."

So begins the story of the wrath of Gunsmoke McGonigle, and seldom does rosy-fingered dawn appear but to herald some new exploit in his war against the Hammer gang—an exploit in which, as a rule, fists, feet, and six-shooters all take part indiscriminately. Gunsmoke, it must be admitted, is a bit of a fool for all his cleverness. He keeps falling into the hands of his enemies through sheer negligence, and, even with the aid of Old Luke Kaley, nobody but the hero of a cowboy novel could have escaped from hopeless situation after hopeless situation like this. At the end of the story, he had no business to allow himself to be at the mercy of Cord Hammer who, with a gun in his hand, was holding the heroine before him as a shield. Even then, however, Gunsmoke proved himself to be a supremely efficient bullet-dodger, and at the same time managed first to smash the bones of one of Hammer's legs with a shot and then his wrist. There may be something to be said for virtue after all. This is a matter on which the cowboy authors are more positive than their master, Homer. It is to be hoped that they are truer to life.

Anyhow, I'm bound to say that by the time I had finished *Gunsmoke McGonigle*, the draughts had mysteriously disappeared. The world seemed a more normal place; the bedroom had become pleasantly warm; and, lying on my pillow, I would not have changed places with the healthiest worker in Fleet Street.

Y. Y.

WHAT LANCASHIRE THINKS TO-DAY

UNTIL last year an almost unrelieved gloom hung over both analysis and action in respect of the appalling toll of life and limb exacted by modern road traffic in Great Britain. April 1938 witnessed the launching of a restricted local experiment which actually justifies genuine optimism of very substantial future reductions in these casualties. The genesis of the experiment may have been composite; at any rate the names of the men in whose brains the policy originated have not yet been published. We can only say that the Home Office and the Ministry of Transport are its joint putative parents, that the national Exchequer furnished the necessary funds, and that the Chief Constable of Lancashire and his men carried out in the area of their jurisdiction a scheme which in six months produced a drop of nearly 50 per cent. in the number of persons injured on the roads of their county, as compared with a drop of about 5 per cent. for the remainder of Britain. The main reduction was in the number of accidents to pedal cyclists, with accidents to children a close second. Incidentally, the experiment either produced or coincided with a reduction in general crime. The experiment was actually the third version of a preliminary scheme. First of all, its sponsors considered augmenting their motor patrols so that an officer should pass a set point on every main road and in every dangerous area at least once an hour right round the clock. This idea was scrapped on the obvious ground that its expense would be fantastic; it would, in fact, have involved the mustering of a thousand additional patrols with five hundred additional vehicles. The second version was that all roads should be patrolled during those hours of the day at which records showed accidents to reach their peak. This less ambitious plan involved one patrol car per every hundred miles of road. It was actually tried, but proved ineffective. Finally, it was decided as a third variant to organise as complete a patrol as possible of the danger zones, and to control other areas by means of a mobile but considerable squad, consisting of 25 vehicles manned by 50 officers.

This purposeful extension and reorganisation of patrols by no means exhausts the new policy, and is not exclusively answerable for its success. It was supplemented by the deliberate creation of a novel atmosphere, and by intensive and carefully planned propaganda. In the past many authorities have attempted to police motor traffic by severe enforcement of innumerable legal regulations, by rather heavy penalties for breaches, and even by employing disguised policemen and camouflaged cars. Experience has shown that such methods do not reduce casualties, and breed resentment between the police and the motoring public. In Lancashire last year every effort was made to build up a genial spirit of

co-operation between road users and road patrols. A blind eye was turned towards mere technical offences. Education was substituted for punishment. Loud speakers were fitted to police cars, so that their occupants could politely admonish motorists for bad driving without wasting much time in chasing them and dismounting for purposes of conversation. Success in these directions was both swift and substantial. At the same time additional equipment rendered the patrols exceptionally useful in proportion to their numbers. Short wave radio was employed for intercommunication between the police, and a fleet of low powered and inexpensive motor cycles proved invaluable for transferring police to areas where their presence was specially desirable.

The slogan behind the introduction of propaganda was that no conceivable opportunity of educating road users should be missed. Gentle remonstrance with individuals was doubtless remarkably effective, but the press and the cinema were enormously valuable; and it may be that the teaching of children in the schools was answerable for much of the improvement.

Before very long road users learnt to regard the police as their friends and protectors, rather than as somewhat untrustworthy persecutors. It thus became possible to render the police vehicles and personnel as conspicuous as possible. In addition the numbers and frequency of the patrols kept the more casual motorists, cyclists and pedestrians perpetually on the alert. The fact that a road user had just met a police patrol was no longer any guarantee that another might not be encountered in a minute or two, or that a third might not suddenly come up from behind. Many instances occurred of a motorist, outraged by the conduct of another motorist, stopping a police patrol, and relating the incident. He would never have done so in the old resentful atmosphere, with the chance of prosecutions at the back of his mind, but would not hesitate to inform a constable whom he regarded as a friend, and who could be trusted to observe the offender's future behaviour, and issue any necessary warning in a fatherly fashion. During the first six months of the experiments over half a million road users were accosted, but only a score of complaints reached the Chief Constable. Oddly enough, a proportion of these came from cyclists. Some of the public elementary schools were a trifle inclined to be obstructive at first, probably owing to an overburdened curriculum.

No figures have yet been published with regard to the additional expense involved in the scheme. But it is probable that cost may in a year or so be identified as the key and crux of the whole business. It is easy to work out the extra cost of such a policy for any given area. It is certain that the cost is a bagatelle compared to the economies resulting to the nation through saving of human life, avoidance of injuries, reduction of insurance expenses, and the like. But whereas the cost of such a scheme is entirely drawn from a single fund, the economies result to a number of individuals and institutions. Moreover, the economies cannot be expressed with any accuracy in terms of £ *s. d.* Nor is it easy to lay hands on the money which is thus saved, and apply it to augmenting the protective system. Nor will the cost of augmented protection be the same in a large agricultural county with few busy roads as in such a highly industrialised area as Lancashire. The solution might be to allot an emergency sum from the national exchequer (for example, by yet another raid on the Road Fund), and to apply it to extending the Lancashire experiment. Within twelve months the economies on a balance should be obvious to hospitals, to the insurance companies, and so to road users as a class. Sound propaganda might then reconcile motorists to a slight increase in motor taxation, if they could be amply convinced that in return their insurance premiums could be proportionately reduced, and their future driving could be enjoyed in a novel atmosphere of friendliness with the police. The financial aspects may be difficult, but public opinion, once convinced of a radical reduction in casualties, would not only accept any reasonable solution, but would demand stringent action.

R. E. DAVIDSON

Miscellany

COUNTRY NOTES

January

RIMBAUD wrote a famous sonnet about the characteristics of the five vowels, A was black, E white, I red, and so on. This somewhat precious conception might be extended to the months of the year. January, to me, is a large pewter plate stained with the reflection of a red sunset; and no doubt others will have their own ideas.

I do not like January very much. It is too stationary. Not enough happens. I like the evidences of life, and in January there are too few of them. It is true that you can find buds on the hazels, and that the small leaves of the wild honeysuckle are already formed and green, but that means very little since everybody knows that the honeysuckles, like the lilacs, seldom close down their business. It is also true that snowdrops and some of the narcissi are coming through the ground, but somehow this does not give me the same pleasure as it would in February. I do not like either plants or children to be precocious. As for the tulip leaves which this year have appeared long before they ought to have been seen at all, no gardener could view them with anything but concern.

On the other hand, the true beauties of January are welcome—the bare trees, the wild wet sky, even the cart-ruts full of water, and the sea-gulls settling on the plough. It is very much the month for a country walk. The small streams are so angry, and even the most exiguous trickle has turned into a minute brown waterfall. Twigs swirl as they are rushed towards the sea. Broken branches lie in disarray, giving a careless air to our trim rides; the wood-pigeons' old nests at the tops of the trees make dark untidy blobs as they nakedly sway. Damp and dishevelled, January is the month for thick shoes, a dog at our heels, and the wind in our faces.

Winter Colour

The dog-wood has seemed more brilliant than ever this winter, perhaps owing to the fact that it has nearly always been wet. Dog-wood, like porphyry, gains in intensity from being wet, and to see the red dog-wood at its best you should sweep suddenly round a bend on a rainy evening with the headlights of your car streaming across it. Then the glistening stems, naked and red from base to tip, stand up like a phalanx of savages bathed in blood. Descriptions of plants usually sound so much better than the reality, but it is not possible to exaggerate the startling effect of *Cornus sanguinea* seen in the right light.

A little winter-flowering tree the oddity of which cannot be exaggerated either is the witch-hazel. The dark brown twigs look as though some child had amused itself by tying them up with bunches of yellow ribbons, and then snipping the ends short. The little bunches flutter all the way up the stems, each secured at the base by a maroon button. There are no leaves at all; the twigs are quite bare save for the numerous yellow stars. Like the wintersweet, the witch-hazel has the faculty of growing in so delicate a design that one might believe them both to be possessed of a sense of drawing as fine as their countrymen the Chinese, in a spare precision that exactly suits the brown earth and grey skies. They have more than stylisation: they have style.

Such economy makes the Christmas roses look tousled and undistinguished as they cower beneath the umbrella of their leaves, but strip all leaves away, and then, in a clear glass, the separate flowers stand out in purity, ice-green and white like blown anemones. It is a very definite improvement on Nature, to deprive some flowers of their leaves. The common white syringa, which one ought to call philadelphus, becomes quite a different thing under such treatment; great branches of it in a tall vase look unrecognisably like some rare white almond; and the wild crab-apple of the hedgerows, its shell-pink blossom clinging against the bough hoary with grey lichen,

achieves a delicacy that the furnished bough never possessed. But best of all are the winter flowerers which have discovered this secret of elegance for themselves without submitting to such vandalism.

Country Speech

How much one regrets that local turns of speech should be passing away! There was a freshness and realism about them which kept the language alive and can never be replaced. Imported into prose they become fossilised and affected, for, accurately reported though they may be in those novels of rural life of which one grows so tired, the spontaneity and even the accent are lacking; imported into poetry, they instantly sound like the archaisms of a poetic convention. If I read the phrase, "The cattle do be biding in the meads," it gives me no pleasure at all, but if a cowman says it to me (as he once actually did) it fills me with delight. I like also being informed that the rabbits are "interrupting" the young trees; at least, I do not like the fact, but the way in which it is conveyed does much to mitigate my annoyance. I resent the mud less when I am told that the cows have "properly slubbed it up." Then sometimes comes a proverbial ring, "He talks too much, talk and do never did lie down together." I do not see where we are to find such refreshing imagery in future, unless, indeed, we look to America where the genius of the vivid phrase still seems to abide.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

THE ART OF SONG

RECENTLY Mr. Clinton-Baddeley delivered an excellent series of talks through the B.B.C. on "Words for Music," in the course of which he made a serious effort to clear up the present misunderstanding, which undoubtedly exists and has existed for some considerable time, between poets and musicians. As Mr. Clinton-Baddeley at the beginning of his first talk pointed out:

> So many famous poets have been unsympathetic to music that it has sometimes seemed that a lack of musical understanding were a trademark of the poet. In explanation of this alleged phenomenon it has been suggested that the poet's ear is listening to a different music, a music of his own, a music sounding in the poet's heart and mind. That the poet hears a music of his own is certainly true but I don't believe for a moment that this music prevents him from appreciating other people's music.

It will help to clarify our ideas on this subject if we start with two facts, namely, that there have been good poets who were musical and good poets who were unmusical. Next, let us ask ourselves what we understand by these terms "musical" and "unmusical"? For a musician music consists of two primary elements: *tone* and *rhythm*. It would be impossible for a musician to be tone-deaf but a poet may be tone-deaf since the two primary elements of poetry are *words* (not *tones*) and rhythm. The poets who have been indifferent or impervious to music have been poets who were in varying degrees either tone-deaf or insensitive to tone. Here I may as well add that absolute tone-deafness is, I suspect, rare; but that all people vary a good deal in their sensitiveness to tone. This applies even to musicians. For example, it is well known that not all good musicians by any means have absolute pitch. This is, perhaps, partly why composers vary so greatly in their sense of tonality. Also, musicians vary (as poets do) very greatly in their sense of rhythm.

Now a poet must be sensitive to some degree to the sound of words since he uses their sounds as well as their meaning for his effects. This awareness of word-sounds is not the same thing as the sense of pitch and I can well imagine that a musician whose sense of pitch was acute might nevertheless be less vividly conscious of the sound-differences between say the words *immaculate* and *chalcedony* than a poet who was, from a musician's point of view, tone-deaf. What I want to make clear is that both poets and musicians vary in type so that their poetry and music will also vary in character; but that although at one extreme the poet and the musician may be of the type that is almost quite insensitive to the other's art as they may also be of the type which by physical endowment is equally sensitive to both arts.

Mr. Clinton-Baddeley in his second talk pointed out that the poet who is writing a song—by which he means writing words for music—must provide the composer with what he calls "manageable words." He went on to say:

> If you read any of Shakespeare's songs aloud you will find that they don't really go very well as readings. It isn't because they are not exquisitely written but because they were not intended to be read aloud. You can't read,
>
> Merrily merrily shall I live now
> Under the blossom that hangs on the bough
>
> without sounding a little arch: but sung, as everyone knows, the words are perfect. Any beautiful lyric written in the last hundred years, on the other hand, can be read aloud and is likely to suffer serious damage if set to music. Here is a fundamental difference—and the difference is that between lyrical poetry before the estrangement of poetry and music and the general character of lyrical poetry since that estrangement; it is the difference between words for music and words not for music.

I entirely agree with Mr. Clinton-Baddeley in his contention that writing words for music is a special branch of the poet's art just as composing songs is a special branch of the composer's art. It is obvious that many good poets and many good musicians have not possessed this gift of song. Others, on the other hand, including some of the supreme masters in each art, have possessed it. Mr. Clinton-Baddeley is daring enough to attempt to define the character of words that are likely to be suitable for music and he decides that the primary requirement is that they should be "simple and not emotional." Plausible as this seems at first, I am not sure that it is absolutely correct. I think Mr. Clinton-Baddeley over-simplifies the problem. One is at first inclined to agree with him when he writes:

> They have to be unemotional or the additional burden of music will be too great for them to bear. The emotional content of some famous lyrics is so much greater than the artifice of construction that it is simply not possible to set them without damaging their sincerity. But such controlled and unemotional words as "I attempt from Love's sickness to fly" or "Where'er you walk cool gales shall fan the glade" are actually incomplete without their music.

But a little reflection leads me to think that just as music can add to the emotional burden of the words so it can lessen or relieve that emotional burden. In other words, it can supply "artifice" when it is lacking in the words as well as emotion when there is mainly artifice. The distinction between artifice and emotion is extremely illuminating, and I am inclined to think that the happiest marriages between words and music occur when the job is divided between the partners and that where the collaboration of words with music is a failure is when either partner has attempted or insisted on trying to do the whole job himself. A very simple tune may be made delightful by the subtle variety of the words in stanza after stanza and words of extreme simplicity may be greatly enhanced by a suitable musical colouring.

Personally, I think that if there is to be a revival in "Song" it will come about through renewed attention on the part of poets as well as musicians to this special branch of their respective arts which demands a true collaboration. The history of the musical song since Schubert is one of a sad and prolonged decline. My own taste is for songs without accompaniment. The perfect marriage between words and music comes, I think, when words and music fit together in a pure melodic and rhythmic line like the old folk-songs which were chiefly sung without instrumental accompaniment. Chords are not required in song and the harmony should be found in the combination of verbal and tonal sounds with the musical harmony only an implication of the melody. Left without instrumental accompaniment singers would feel themselves compelled to give full value to the words and any incompatibility between words and music would hit the ear immediately. To my mind the modern so-called "art" song is an ugly monstrosity. There may be rare successes in this genre but we have receded to a point where we must return to fundamental principles before the art of song can revive.

W. J. TURNER

CENTENARY

AT 1 a.m. on January 19th, 1839, in Aix-en-Provence, to an avaricious hat-maker and his wife in all but law was born Paul Cézanne the painter. This combination of events and conditions has had extensive consequences, quite apart from the fact that the infant of that morning produced pictures worth from two to four million sterling (according to the condition of the Stock Exchange) and that gentlemen in London, Paris and New York have made neat fortunes out of selling them. Cézanne's version of the red earth at Aix produced the Fauvist movement, Provençal houses became the cube in Cubism. Braque has made a whole art out of the matiere and forms of one picture. By now something like 600 books have been published on Cézanne, and half a dozen aesthetic creeds have been made out of misunderstanding his simple aims. He has also influenced, often in quite contradictory ways, the design of posters and scenery, furniture, textiles, buildings, toys and so on. His little income and his lack of material success have helped many splodging amateurs to undeserved fame. His painstaking way of applying paint has been made the excuse for acres of mechanical slapdash. He has made parts of Provence a sort of picture gallery for those who know the trick.

Among great artists Seurat was his only rival in non-success. Cézanne was lucky to be born after the rise of the middle class in France had made his independence possible and before this independence of patronage became the divorce from society at large which painting now endures. His peculiar achievement in preserving integrity and vitality in spite of having no audience is by some historical analogy the cause of the present situation in which the art and its connoisseurship have become inextricably mixed up. But he himself was dead before painting became, as it is too often to-day, less a matter of depicting things seen than of choosing the smartest way of doing so.

When Cézanne came to Paris the robust realism of Courbet was in full swing. The return to nature started by Constable was reviving French art. Cézanne's early romantic masterpieces—such as the portrait of his father and his famous *Black Clock* were painted under the influence of Courbet and Manet. It was not until after the Franco-Prussian war that Cézanne made his alliance with Pissarro which resulted in Pissarro's best work and the formation of what we now recognise as the characteristic Cézanne technique. From '72 to '78 Cézanne was an impressionist, sitting in their cafés and even occasionally being addressed by Manet. He showed with them in '74 and '77. When after the failure of the '77 show the group broke up, Sisley went gradually to pieces at Moret sur Loing, Pissarro threw away his gifts to become an imitator of his own pupils and Renoir turned his back on one of the loveliest talents a painter has ever brought to maturity. Cézanne alone was untouched. From '72 onwards he was steadily perfecting his method, sure of what he wanted to do. In these years he lived more and more in Provence and began his series of the Montagne Ste. Victoire and the great still lives. To this period belong the still life and the mountain in the National Gallery, the perfectly realised *Rocky Landscape* in the Tate Gallery. All through the '80's his natural romanticism is disciplined rigorously, his painting hard and clear. It was not until '95 that Cézanne had his first success when Vollard traced him and had a show of his pictures. A year later he painted his view of Ste. Victoire seen from a clearing to the south-west (this was shown at the Lefevre Gallery in 1937) whose rich tranquillity is the climax of the classical period and whose poetry is a prelude to Cézanne's last burst of exultant energy. The pictures of this last phase are not so well known as those of earlier periods, but more than any others they express the man—the romantic poet born in a classic landscape, a Claude with a giant's force. Here the mountain surges in huge upheavals. The plain spreads itself in an amazing intricacy of ordered discords. The dingy Chateau Noir becomes unexpectedly magnificent, the trees around it take on magic. The mood is joyous and exultant, or fierce, as he sets a roaring war between the green trees and the huge blue sky. Cézanne released from his failure in life, from the impossibility of his relations with most of his fellow-men, achieved suddenly a torrent of lyrical expression. These last paintings make even the most emotional Van Gogh look like the trappings and the outward show of passion.

"Pontier, Pontier," he called out in his delirium as he was dying. This was the director of the Aix Museum who had refused to have his pictures. This year the present director has agreed to take all the pictures down (even the famous Ingres of Jupiter and Thetis) and to fill the place with a commemorative exhibition. The show is being organised by Mr. John Rewald, whose address is "Chateau Noir."

GRAHAM BELL

THE MOVIES

"Stolen Life," at the Plaza.
"Le Patriote," at Studio One.
"Education de Prince," at the Curzon.
"Conflit," at the Carlton.

Stolen Life has the sort of plot which Shakespeare used—but only in his comedies. A tale of twins so alike that one of them can expect to deceive husband and father by impersonating the other demands the persuasive glamour of verse and the romantic Illyrian close; and it is greatly to the credit of Dr. Czinner's direction and the playing of Elisabeth Bergner and Michael Redgrave that they keep us entertained, if not convinced, by the preposterous narrative which they unfold. Why can the movies, in spite of their tradition of surface realism, get away with something we would not tolerate in the realistic theatre? The answer is partly the absence of intervals: the strain of great drama makes them welcome, but few things are more dismal than the intervals of a poor play, which merely give us time to consider its absurdity; it is undeniable that in this respect the everyday commercial theatre is now at a great disadvantage compared to the cinema. A more important reason is concerned with the appeal to the eye. Consider the beginning of *Stolen Life*: Bergner and Redgrave meet climbing in the Swiss mountains, and since the camera work is throughout excellent the rawest actors could hardly spoil those magnificent opening scenes, whose theatrical equivalent would be either a highly coloured backcloth of the Matterhorn or, more probably, a sitting-room in the local hotel. The storm off the Breton coast is another triumph of good photography and good cutting; the successive shots of sea and sky, gulls swooping down wind and fishermen watching on the shore, build up a pictorial and dramatic climax which Shakespeare could surpass by the power of words, but our contemporary dramatic realists could not hope to suggest.

Michael Redgrave's performance as an explorer is so full of modesty, honesty and charm that he begins to look like a possible rival to Gary Cooper; and Elisabeth Bergner reveals once more her great talent for intimate dialogue and the suggestion by simple means of hidden emotional depths. But I wish she had not elected to play both the twins, for our consciousness of camera tricks seriously interferes with our belief in the story. To see a group of four at a cocktail bar consisting of Bergner, Redgrave, Wilfred Lawson and Bergner again merely makes me dizzy. Not content with that, Miss Bergner of Ephesus and Miss Bergner of Syracuse insist on sharing the same hotel bedroom. I should never have told them apart had not their father obligingly pointed out that one parted her hair on the left and the other on the right. But even then a problem remained: which used which parting? Luckily I recalled a Professor Blimp of my acquaintance, who is accustomed to remark that he never knew which was the Right and which the Left in politics until he remembered that the Right was always right. After I had observed that

the right Miss Bergner parted her hair on the right and the wrong 'un on the left, all was plain sailing. I guarantee a thoroughly enjoyable evening to anyone who goes to the Plaza armed with this indispensable mnemonic.

Le Patriote is ideal entertainment for those who like historical films; the dialogue and direction may be on the dull side, but at least there is nothing to offend the ear and a great deal to distract the eye. The film tells once more the story of Tsar Paul I, and the subtlety of Harry Baur's performance saves that ridiculous autocrat from appearing wholly contemptible: Baur in this part gives us the best of Jannings minus the excessive gasping and leering and grunting. Pierre Renoir makes a many-faceted and impressive Count Pahlen, and there are a few moments of pleasantly ironic comedy. The excellence of the sets and the sense of period shown in this picture are unusual.

Education de Prince is a rather amusing little fable based on a play by Maurice Donnay. Silistria has endured seventeen revolutions in eighteen years, and as the film begins we see the eighteenth brigand chief, General Braonlitch, watching the execution of the seventeenth with emotion and the solemn words: "He was a great soldier." A petrol magnate (Alerme) who holds vast interests in Silistria, tires of the endless bribes and decides to restore the monarchy. With the assistance of a Parisian "Universal Uncle" (a delightfully suave performance by Louis Jouvet) he finds and trains for the throne the exiled Prince, a mild and slightly aesthetic youth (Robert Lynen). Elvira Popesco is amusing as the bankrupt ex-Queen, but the complications lapse from satire into farce which betrays its theatrical origin not only in the stock situations but in the stagey emphasis of some of the acting.

Conflit is a melodrama, very much in the American style, about an unmarried mother who gives her baby to her married sister and allows her to bring it up as her own. Except for a blackmailing scene which went on for several minutes after we had all seen the point, this is a very slick example of its *genre;* fortunately the two sisters are played this time by two different actresses, and even more fortunately one of them is Corinne Luchaire.

PETER GALWAY

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"They Walk Alone," at the Shaftesbury

They Walk Alone is a melodrama well up to the Grand Guignol standard of horror—in the Grand Guignol's most unnerving days. Played in a warm theatre, on one muggy night, it did make the blood run cold: perceptible shivers passed through the audience, and in the first entr'acte people went out for coats. The subject—sexual dementia resulting in a series of killings under (apparently) unspeakable circumstances—is sufficiently promising; the production and acting are *tours de force*. The play is very skilfully built up of successions of climaxes, interleaved with cheery domestic comedy—the Tallents family, in the slightly improbable lounge hall of their Lincolnshire farmhouse, show quite startling powers of recuperation: needlework, backchat, patience, flirtation, high teas and snacks involving much crockery are the norm of existence. Little farming seems to go on. Actually, it is to this stress laid on the normal that the play owes, as a horror, its appalling success.

Emmy Baudine, the new maid from Cornwall, appears to enter cheerfully into family life. Miss Beatrix Lehmann takes the whole range of this part, from the comedy passages to the seizures, with a really shattering virtuosity. She makes her Emmy not three but four dimensional. The force behind her acting could be enough to blow most other characters off the stage. But Miss Carol Goodner as Bess—the eldest Tallent, the married sister—stands up to her like a rock: the balance of power kept between these two actresses adds what there is of substantial worth to the play. Miss Goodner, with a touch of almost brutal imagination, raises Bess above the conventionalised good girl. These two pieces of acting are worth standing (if you *can* stand it) the pathological racket, to see. Mr. Jimmy Hanley's blond, bold, silly, ill-fated Larry is enchanting; Mr. Beckett Bould's Mr. Tallent is nice work. Miss Rene Ray's ethereal goofiness does not come out in Julie quite as it should.

Mr. Viertel, the producer, lets nothing slip. He must have done something to the back-stage acoustics, for the noises off seem to sound in outdoor space. There are one or two rather glaring improbabilities—why is nothing heard of the police, and are there, near Lincoln, moors and mineshafts? Do Lincolnshire farmers speak with Oxford accents? However: a first rate play, if you have a taste for these things.

"She Stoops to Conquer," at the Old Vic

If recent revivals of old comedies have not always been as amusing as they should be, it is because the conventions on which such works are based are essentially artificial, and modern actors and actresses will persist in playing them in a broad, human, naturalistic manner. *She Stoops to Conquer* is a comedy of humours and types. To depict Young Marlow as any particular dandy, or Mr. Hardcastle as an individual old gentleman, is merely to slow up the action of the entire play: they are as impersonal almost as the characters of Plautus or Terence. Thus, the touches of contemporary whimsy or modern "business" indulged in by members of the Old Vic caste struck a somewhat discordant note in a production otherwise brisk, decorative and delightful. One was sorry that Mr. Edward Chapman (in the part of Mr. Hardcastle) should have added to his "Sothick vivacity" by confusing the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Marlborough, and that Miss Ursula Jeans should have found it necessary to leave the stage perpetually with a hop, skip and a jump. But, when the actors forgot to be real, the effect was captivating. There was no need for Mr. George Benson (as Tony Lumpkin) to deliver his lines with such a heavily Cockney accent, when Lumpkin had never been to London; but Miss Margaret Yarde put a great deal into Tony's mother; Mr. John Mills made a graceful and dashing, if here and there slightly too facetious and up-to-date, Marlow; Miss Pamela Brown was suitably romantic as Miss Neville; and Mr. Anthony Nicholls extracted the uttermost from her lover, Hastings. Certainly, Goldsmith stands the test of resurrection: his dialogue remains fresh, his portraiture lively. The caste seemed to enjoy itself, and so did the audience.

"The Western Chamber," at the New Theatre

The Western Chamber, a thirteenth-century Chinese play, by S. I. Hsiung, makes its delicate bid for the affections of those how enjoyed his *Lady Precious Stream*. Though there is so much more to it than prettiness, its prettiness is most likely to catch the popular eye—the inner eye, for words make the setting, filling the bare stage, with its blue backdrop and pieces of lacquer furniture, with the late spring melancholy of dropping petals, the rains of autumn, or moonlight, mistcapped mountains, brigand-invested gorges, the monastry court, the intimate closeness of the Western Chamber or the landscape from the Pavilion of Farewell. Action exhausts itself after the first act, when the lustful Flying Tiger has been subdued. From then on, the play is a month of Sundays: with heads fatalistically inclined the embroidered lovers approach each other. Madame Tsui, the beloved's mother, shows the twistiness of an Old Testament parent where a marriage bargain, made under pressure, is concerned. Ying Ying burns incense to her dead father, abandons a devious modesty, goes to a tryst behind an embroidered curtain; Master Chang is torn from her to pass his examinations, returns in triumph; the lovers reunite. Mr. Geoffrey Edwards plays Master Chang with sensitive gravity; Miss Helen Haye's Madame Tsui is a definite figure; Miss Kay Walsh droops, smiles, yields and rouges prettily as Ying Ying. Miss Joyce Redman as Hung Niang, the maid-confidant, does, however, walk away with the evening; she is adorable.

The Western Chamber cannot have been intended to be walked away with by anyone—but what a difficulty this is: to transpose *The Western Chamber* into the terms of a West End theatre's acceptabilities. The diction and the miming are excellent, but the players cannot resist stealing a few laughs, or departing, by a sudden modern inflection, from the remote flatness of spoken poetry. Quaintness and intimacy were what the New Theatre audience quite palpably wanted: they got intimacy, now and again, at the cost of these breaks with the play's mood, and quaintness could but threaten, most of the time. One should, however, visit *The Western Chamber*; its coolness is very soothing, these days.

Leon Zack and Max Chapman at the Storran Gallery

Zack prefers to paint in black, or—when feeling exceptionally gay—in grey. The world of his imagination is peopled by beggars

and starvelings, ashy, emaciated or even deformed. Like Tchilichieff and Berman, he exploits the pathos found in Picassos of the Blue Period, and his pictures should have a considerable appeal to romantics. Portraits and Still Lifes show his technical accomplishment apart from the elegantly morbid subjects that he has made specially his own: his drawing has a fluency and charm that English artists rarely can command. He is a decadent, in the politest sense of the term, and we can imagine him fashioning very acceptable illustrations for Laforgue or Corbière. Mr. Chapman works in a somewhat similar tradition, but with less insistence upon mystery and more upon decoration. Naked youths caressing cats are his favourite subject, but the best picture in this show is probably a portrait of a boy achieved with very pleasant *matière*, and showing the influence of Modigliani. Mr. Chapman's pictures are apt to be rather empty, but he is accomplished and seems to paint with feeling, whereas so many painters seem to paint only out of habit.

Living Art in England at the London Gallery. G. W. Pailthorpe and R. Medinkoff at Guggenheim Jeune.

For the benefit of refugees the London Gallery has organised an exhibition of English painting and sculpture, under the title "Living Art"—a somewhat bumptious title, since almost all the works are either surrealist or abstract. In the *London Bulletin*, which contains the catalogue, Mr. Herbert Read publishes a very interesting essay, in which he argues that the artist should take refuge from the blackness of the modern world, like the monks of the Thebaid, and that "Art must now enter its individual phase—even its hermetic phase." But history suggests that artists are uncommonly detached; and when the Enemy arrive, they may find the Constructionist busy, like Archimedes, with triangles, but the painter that likes girls or cherries is unlikely to start preferring abstraction merely because the air is black with bombers. The London Gallery exhibition includes good works by Francis Hodgkins, John Piper, John Banting, Paul Nash, Kokoschka, Julian Trevelyan and Wadsworth, as well as unsurprising works by Mondrian, Gabo, Penrose and Ben Nicholson. The Wadsworth is a *Hommage à Seurat*, painted in a pointillist style: it misses Seurat's luminosity, but has a more interesting surface than his usual skilful enamelling. A new figure by Henry Moore, showing African influence, is worth careful study. Guggenheim Jeune have a collection of paintings and drawings made by an analyst and the patient during the process of psycho-analysis. Genital forms abound, and the interest of the show to psychologists may be considerable. But, as one might reasonably expect from the circumstances of their production, these works seem to have no more in common with works of art than the case-histories in Dr. Ernest Jones's books have in common with literature.

Triple Bill at the Westminster "The Bridal Crown," at the Twentieth Century Theatre

The triple bill—a pleasant revival—consisted of an Anatol playlet by Schnitzler, Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and Barrie's *The Will*. The first, entitled *A Farewell Supper*, was almost too slight; it needed the "business" of a school of acting which, except for Guitry, seems to have died out. Our attention was divided between the lovers, tortuously breaking it off, and the supper they were engaged in eating. Very odd it was, beginning with a red wine and some pale-looking oysters; and despite the vivacious attraction of Mr. Robert Harris and Miss Phyllis Konstam, the supper almost won. After a brief interval, *Miss Julie*. With *The Father* it is the best, as well as the best known, of Strindberg's naturalistic plays. We had already learnt from the programme, to our astonishment, that this was the first public performance in England; thanks to the Censor, it has taken forty-five years to arrive. *Miss Julie* can still blow a hole in any programme, and the production at the Westminster conveyed all the violence and much of the subtlety. Mr. George Woodbridge, as the valet, and Miss Ruth Lodge, as Miss Julie, go for their parts straightforwardly and bring out the swagger and weakness in each. They admire, bully, spit and collapse in turn. If their performance misses anything it is this: the pride of physical attraction which brings them together is only hinted at, and the heady occasion—Midsummer Eve—might have been suggested more vividly. The London Mask Theatre Company are to be congratulated on producing plays of this quality. *Miss Julie* was followed by Barrie's *The Will*, a neat little three-scener, and for this author dry in sentiment.

The Twentieth Century Theatre have also revived Strindberg. *The Bridal Crown* is a folk play in which legend, the supernatural and local peasant customs abound. It does not export easily and obviously requires some lavishness in production. The Twentieth Century Theatre, with few effects, did surprisingly well.

THE COMING WEEK

SUNDAY, January 29th—
- John Katz: "What Is Civilisation?," Conway Hall, 11.
- India League National Independence Demonstration, Trafalgar Square, 3.
- Colonies and Peace Meeting, Finsbury Town Hall, E.C.1, 7.30.

MONDAY, January 30th—
- Dr. H. Mannheim: "Penal Reform, Its Implications and Limitations," London School of Economics, 5.
- National Labour Club Dance, New Burlington Galleries, 8.

TUESDAY, January 31st—
- James A. Joyce: "Youth and Peace Service," Friends House, 1.20.
- Sir John Pollock: "France," Morley College, 8.
- "Reporters from China," Speakers: Prof. P. C. Chang, Freda Utley, Charlotte Haldane, Friends House, 8.
- "The Importance of Being Earnest," Globe (matinée).
- "Gas Light," Globe.

WEDNESDAY, February 1st—
- Sir E. John Maude: "Some Legal Aspects of Town and Country Planning," London School of Economics, 5.
- Canon Morris: "Individual War Resistance," Conway Hall, 8.
- B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

THURSDAY, February 2nd—
- Explanatory Lecture with Musical Examples on the Courtauld-Sargent Programmes, by Scott Goddard, Memorial Hall, 7.
- Dr. E. Jacobs: "Socialised Medicine in the U.S.S.R.," 153 Finchley Road, 8.15.
- Lt.-Comm. E. Young: "Munich—Before and After," Bethnal Green Public Library, 8.30.
- Song Recital by D'Alvarez, Aeolian Hall, 8.30.
- Tchaikovsky's Ballet "The Sleeping Princess," Sadler's Wells. Gala Performance in aid of the Housing Centre.
- "Nora," Duke of York's.

FRIDAY, February 3rd—
- A Conference for Youth: "Democracy To-day and To-morrow," University College. Till Feb. 5th. Opening address by Lord Baldwin. Particulars from Association for Education in Citizenship, 10 Victoria Street.
- Stephen Spender: "Realism in Literature," Group Theatre Rooms, Great Newport Street, 8.15.

Correspondence

THE ART THAT CONCEALS

SIR,—What has gone wrong with the British press? A slow decay is always harder to detect than a sudden break, and I believe that my British friends are not aware how far their press has lately deteriorated. Returning to London after an absence of four and a half years, I find the change alarming. For I do not see how the Parliamentary system can survive where the press is not free, or where the press does not choose to use its freedom.

I hear that there has recently been an increase in governmental pressure on the newspapers, and I know that there are legal restrictions that can interfere with press liberty. But the legal restrictions do not seem to have played an important part; and the pressure of politicians on newspapers is an old story, which only works if the newspapers care to be amenable to pressure.

The politician in power always wants the press to be discreet. But the parliamentary system demands that the press be indiscreet, that it ask all the most awkward questions and publish all the most inconvenient facts. Apart from questions which concern only the private lives of private citizens, the more indiscreet the press the more healthy the political system.

In the United States, for example, the Opposition party has recently been a sad affair. One of the handicaps of Mr. Roosevelt's administration, and the explanation of some of its failures, has been the lack of a first class, fighting, informed Opposition in Congress. But there has been no lack of opposition in the press. The press has been bitter, cantankerous, and sometimes unfair. But at least it has been alive. At least it has made issues, forcing the country and the politicians to consider them. If the American press had been discreet during these years, if it had been in the least like the British press, there would have been no opposition at all. The administration would have sunk into the lethargy of people who think they are almost perfect; the politicians would have gone quietly to sleep.

It is true that the American press carries its indiscretion into the private lives of private people. And where the Judges are complacent (which is almost everywhere in a country cursed with an elected judiciary) our press turns the courts of justice into a farce. But in Britain you are not threatened with these excesses. Your Judges use their powers to preserve the dignity of their courts. And the private lives of private citizens are safeguarded by your admirable custom of not reporting divorce cases, and of ascribing the routine sins of humanity to "Mr. X" and "Miss Y."

Why, then, should such a paralysing discretion have fallen upon your press, precisely in the field where the press ought to be indiscreet? Why has the great editor been superseded by the eccentric publisher? What lies behind the suppression of stories which any city-desk man would recognise for "news"? The whole thing recalls Mr. Humbert Wolfe's familiar comment:

> You cannot hope to bribe or twist,
> Thank God, the British journalist:
> But seeing what the man will do
> Unbribed, there's no occasion to.

Let me give some examples. The examples may not be accurate, for when the newspapers stop printing the news, the average citizen's source of news is little more than casual gossip. I choose two out of many stories I have heard since returning to London. And the maddest thing about the stories is that they do not suggest any consecutive policy on the part of the press. In one case a pro-Government story is suppressed, in the other case the story is one which the Government might be expected to dislike.

It is said that at the height of the September crisis Sir Oswald Mosley undertook to hold a small meeting in Hammersmith—an outdoor rally to protest against the war which then seemed imminent. To his surprise, instead of finding a handful of his followers surrounded by a crowd of hostile watchers, Sir Oswald discovered that the anti-war meeting was popular and that thousands had turned out to join the rally. He thereupon marched the crowd into the heart of London, picking up new recruits on the way.

These people cared nothing for Sir Oswald and his Fascists, but everything for the idea of an anti-war rally. The press said nothing, because (I am told) the press has adopted a policy of not mentioning Mosley. That would seem like a sensible policy for a private citizen. But is the press doing its job if it does not give the news? In the United States the press tries to deal with Fascism by investigating its causes, dissecting the anti-semitic mythology, and discussing the financial backing behind it. We think it our business to wake the public up about it.

My other story is a more recent one. There was a memorial meeting in a large hall, in an inconvenient part of town, on a drizzling Sunday night, for the 543 British members of the International Brigade who were killed in Spain. It is said that 12,000 people attended, and that almost 2,000 more were turned away because there was no room. Three of the leading, and most respected, London newspapers seem not to have mentioned the meeting in any of their editions.

Such a meeting, attended by such a crowd, at the present moment in history, is definitely news. No managing editor could justify leaving it out, except on the grounds that he was ordered to leave it out. And there is no power in Britain which can order a managing editor to leave such news out—except the managing editor's own boss.

Why do they do it? What are the publishers of England up to? To an outsider their policy of self-censorship does not make sense. It results in bad newspapers. It means that the public loses confidence in the press. It means that more and more people turn to the wireless for news, to the private News Letters, to the weeklies, to pamphlets, and to other services which could not compete with an adequate daily press. What do the publishers gain by devaluing the product which they themselves are selling?

I have asked these questions all over London during the past few weeks. The answers I have received have not been illuminating. Some people merely reply that the American press is also pretty bad. My Right wing friends say that, of course, the whole press of London is in the hands of the Reds. My Left wing friends say that the press is controlled by class-conscious crypto-fascists. But if the self-censorship of the British press is really a plot to advance the cause of the Right or the cause of the Left, it seems to me a very inefficient plot. The only cause which is clearly being advanced is the anti-newspaper cause. The British press is not making itself a fighting instrument for one side or the other. It is merely making itself genteel, in the weakest sense of the word.

Can it be that a lot of brand-new barons, with the social insecurity of the brand-new, have discovered that they can make money (in the short run) by turning their newspapers into a more and more innocuous series of flamboyant feature articles? Having made such a discovery, such people might have a tendency to follow that road toward ruin, to destroy their own properties, in order to avoid the danger of printing a piece of news which might annoy Important People.

And it seems to me a safe rule that unless the press is very annoying to a lot of Important People the press is of little use to the country. Only by being indiscreet and troublesome can the press deserve the freedom of the press or the confidence of the public.

HERBERT AGAR

14 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.

CHINA

SIR,—Mr. Floud reproaches me with taking a "static" view of the Chinese situation in my review of Harold Isaacs' *Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*. He writes that "all the genuine nationalists from Chiang Kai-shek downwards, including Pai Chung-hsi and the Kwangsi clique, the Communist Party and the Eighth Route Army, are determined to carry on the war to the end," and that "there seems no reason why, on lines in some ways rather similar to those pursued by the Spanish People's Front, co-operation should not continue in times of peace."

I quite agree that if co-operation in a Popular Front for purposes of social reform is all the Chinese Communists are going to want after the war is over, and if Chiang and Pai are convinced that that *is* really all they want, the co-operation of "all the genuine nationalists, including . . . the Communist Party" should not be so very difficult. The Communists were proscribed and massacred in 1927 because the propertied classes were afraid that they were going to repeat the Russian October Revolution in China. Obeying the Comintern instructions, the Chinese Communists refrained from striking until it was too late, but their propaganda in those days was definitely that of proletarian revolution. If they can now persuade their allies in the national united front that they no longer mean anything of the kind, their prospects are no doubt much brighter than I suggested in my review.

I certainly did not mean to imply that a Chinese victory in the present war would be followed simply by a reversion to the social and political order of two years go. There would be every reason to expect an elimination of "the more notorious reactionaries," of the weaker "feudal" elements and of the old compradore type. We may anticipate a new order modelled in outline on the institutions developed over the last decade in Kwangsi. But that is something very different from the kind of society at which the Communists formerly aimed.

Mr. Floud writes that he hopes I do not charge the Chinese Communists with betraying the cause of Communism. I assure him that I do not. The cause of Communism is whatever the Communist Parties of the world from time to time declare it to be.

G. F. HUDSON

Oxford.

SIR,—Mr. G. F. Hudson is a historian, not a politician, and it cannot be of concern to him whether or not he is "doing a disservice to China" in pointing out the lessons of the past or suggesting what may happen in the future. Hence Mr. Bernard Floud misses the mark in his indignant letter in your last week's issue on the subject of Mr. Hudson's review of *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*.

Personally I am not one of those who think that any country or party can derive ultimate benefit from shutting its eyes to disagreeable possibilities, or hiding unpalatable truths from its own people or foreigners. Most Left sympathisers to-day know nothing, and wish to know nothing, of the terrible mistakes or miscalculations which led to the massacre of Chinese Communists and workers in 1927 and subsequent years, to the virtual wiping out of the militant Trade Unions of the Chinese proletariat, and to a complete loss of faith in a revolutionary "Bolshevik" policy amongst the Chinese working class and intelligentsia.

To point out, as Mr. Hudson does, that the same social elements which caused the streets of Shanghai, Hankow and Canton, to run with the blood of the proletariat and its "vanguard," might do it again, is no "disservice to China."

Where I disagree with Mr. Hudson is in his assumption that they will either need, or want, to do so. For the Chinese Communists to-day neither proclaim nor follow a revolutionary policy fatal

to the possessing classes or to Chiang Kai-shek himself. In 1927 it was a question of "who whom"—would Chiang Kai-shek and the Right wing of the Kuomintang destroy the Communists, or the Communists destroy them. Were they going to let Stalin, in his own words, utilise them to the end and then fling them away like a squeezed-out lemon, or were they going to do the squeezing and flinging away themselves?

To-day there is no such issue; in the present united front Chiang and his henchmen are definitely predominant and the Communists do not seek to supplant him even after the war is over. The forces of the Left may gain strength as the war progresses, but they are unlikely to do so unless Chiang throws his weight on their side. Why should Chiang want to destroy Communists who no longer advocate the class war, or "liquidate" landowners, or seek to supplant him as leader of the nation? The plain fact is that there are no "Bolsheviks" to-day in China; they have all become Mensheviks who argue that China must go through the "bourgeois-democratic" phase, and must devote all her strength to fighting the *national* enemy, Japan. The Chinese Communists struck me as being both realistic and sincere and this is the only realistic policy they can pursue. For the situation to-day is the legacy of the past and the past cannot be undone.

Another most vital difference in the situation to-day as compared with 12 years ago, is that the Chinese Communists now have their own army and their own military base. Their strength is no longer in the cities amongst the proletariat but in the provinces they control, in their seasoned troops in the 8th Route army, and amongst those peasants who have benefited from their reforms or who understand what they are out for, viz., agrarian and administrative reform, not agrarian revolution. They have ceased to be a revolutionary party, but they are militarily a force to be reckoned with, and they now have the support of nearly all the petty bourgeois and intellectual liberal reformers who a decade ago reluctantly followed Chiang Kai-shek and the Right wing of the Kuomintang.

It would probably be better for China, and it would certainly clarify the position to the outside world, if, instead of retaining the name of Communists they were to call themselves Radicals in the English nineteenth century meaning of the word. FREDA UTLEY

DEMOCRACY AND THE ARMY

SIR,—In reply to the letter which you published on January 14th from G. M. Bayliss under the heading, "Democracy and the Army," I should like to be allowed to make a few comments. He states that in criticising the shortcomings of our leadership during the war, one has to remember that that of the other combatants was no better. I take the view that we, with our enormous Empire resources, together with the Allies having taken four years to beat what virtually amounted to little more than a single-handed Germany, is in itself sufficient commentary on the gross ineptitude of our commanders.

It is only right that the common people should have some knowledge of the appalling mismanagement to which they were subjected; and anyone who takes the trouble can easily satisfy himself that the following remarks are now generally accepted facts. In doing so, not only does the dismal fact come to light that no outstanding figure (if we except Lawrence of Arabia) emerged out of the whole of the Allied armies, but, what is far worse, that the leaders were mostly guilty of petty jealousy, obstinacy, lack of co-operation and extreme dislike and mistrust of the politicians at home—so much so that they even went to the extreme length at times of deliberately withholding the truth and misleading them. Furthermore, they were in the vast majority of cases wedded to a general plan of campaign on the Western Front which was consistently out of date, and which, it soon became obvious, was the most wasteful and least effective.

Your correspondent's tribute to the superior clothing and feeding of the British army is small consolation for the knowledge that hundreds of thousands of lives were wantonly thrown away without any sort of gain and without a single redeeming feature. Surely these facts are hardly calculated to inspire the average man with confidence so far as the army is concerned in any future war (which God forbid); the last, which was at the time called "the war to end war," has had the same consequences as nearly all previous ones, its aftermath proving ultimately to be a provocation to further war.

In order that I shall not be accused of "ill-informed criticism," I would refer to the various books written by Capt. Liddell Hart who, I believe I am correct in saying, is generally considered by competent judges to be at least one of the outstanding military experts living to-day. One trusts (somewhat fatalistically) that the necessary lessons have been learnt by those who will have to command our present army, and that the standard of training and intelligence is considerably higher than formerly.

Burges Road, Thorpe Bay. G. L. BRAIDWOOD

MEDICAL AID FOR SPAIN

SIR,—Messages from Spain tell intensely moving stories of the terrible slaughter at the front where medical supplies are pitifully inadequate. We have just sent out by air a quantity of morphine, chloroform and compressed dressings. Arrangements are well in hand for further supplies to leave London this week-end. The A.E.U. has supplied a large lorry. Another large lorry is being filled with surgical instruments, medical supplies, disinfectants, X-Ray material and five marquees, urgently requested by cable for use as field dressing stations. Help us to send out more convoys. Our nurses look to us to make their work more effective and the Spanish people need, perhaps at this moment more than ever, some practical expression of our sympathy and admiration.

GEORGE JEGER,
Organising Secretary.

Spanish Medical Aid Committee,
24 New Oxford Street, W.C.1.

We are glad to acknowledge the following further sums for Spanish Relief: Anon. (£50); W. H. B., E. M. H., Margaret B. Mott, M. Richmond and R. M. Cripps, "Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday" (£5); Rev. Wm. Sutherland (£4 4s.); J. S. (£3 3s.); S. Dawson (£3); Anon., M. L. and G. M. B., "Highlander," "Jackdaw," E. M. M., C. and M. R., V. E. Smith (£2); R. D. Morrison (£1 10s.); Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Lamont, Harry Rée, C. Russell-Smith, J. S. Wilkinson, John C. Wishart (£1 1s.); W. J. Willis (£1 9d.); T. D. S. Adams, "Anglers," Anon. (2), B. B., H. Cloke, R. M. Glen, R. Hibbert, M. S. L., D. A. Sharpe, M. K. Richmond, W. G. Watson (£1); Mr. and Mrs. J. L. V. and Mrs. G. W. (15s.); Anon., Florence Boatte, L. B. C., K. J. and J. A. C., W. S. Heaton Norris, E. J. P., W. E. D. Stephens, E. L. Sturges (10s.); A. E. Collinge, Editorial Studio, Odhams, R. D., E. M. L. (7s. 6d.); Prudence Lowe (7s.); E. M. S. (6s.); J. A. Faris (5s. 6d.); G. G. Evans, J. L. Freeman, J. Kenworthy, N. L., C. M. M., E. L. Pissarro (5s.); Anon. (2s. 6d.); James Lawrence ($5).

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

AT the Lyceum pantomime the audience has been singing with enthusiasm:

We're nice people
With nice manners
But we've got no money at all.

If one substituted the word *power* for money the verse would express what nine out of ten people think in England to-day. It is not true, but they have been hypnotised by the course of events abroad, and by their fear of war to believe it. This false feeling of helplessness, repudiation of the world as it is, and inability to do anything useful or effective, is producing an increasing resemblance between our "nice people" and those in Russia before the revolution. Thanks to this an English audience is no longer puzzled by the principal characters in a Russian play, but recognises that it is in the same predicament. Like Russians living under the Tsarist regime, we suffer from moral cowardice, and are aware of it. It is the crowd of odd fish who fill the background of Russian plays and novels (especially characteristic of Tchehov and Turgenev) which mystifies the ordinary reader. Who were these shabby eccentrics, these penniless but often titled hangers-on who clustered round the samovar through the long afternoons, back-biting the head of the household and his wife, and discussing intimate matters with all and sundry? Who licensed them to spend their lives cheating at cards, talking nonsensical scandal, and longing to lay wreaths of immortelles on a wife's grave in Père Lachaise? Why did they stay to be insulted, to be required to crow like cocks, to alternately act the clown, and inform their hostess of her husband's infidelities? And the reader is rather shocked to discover that these supernumeraries were poor relations, connected by blood or marriage with the family which spasmodically makes fun of them so cruelly, or helps them to saucers of cherry jam. In England such a crowd would be intolerable; our houses are not large enough, or hearts warm enough to put up with them.

* * *

Just as in every litter of pigs there are two or three runts which do not thrive, so every human family has its ineffectives, its wasters who can never put on fat. In Russia, they clustered under the family roof tree, in England they invariably leave it and find shelter in the Colonies, or in Scarborough and the dingy suburbs. The cast-offs of most families are weak, helpless, shy and secretly proud, they stammer embarrassing excuses and prefer to suffer the extremes of poverty rather than to apply to their glossy kindred. One of the most beautiful of George Moore's stories, *Wilfred Holmes*, is about such a character, a gentle misfit who spends his life-time learning to play the flute, lives upon an allowance which becomes overdue, and writes a letter to a newspaper about the blackbird's song. A rather similar character provides the subject for one of the most charming sketches from real life that I have read. *Uncle Lawrence*, by Oliver Warner (Chatto, 5s.), is a true story. Mr. Warner knew that he had an uncle in Canada, the mention of whose name led to a gentle shrugging of the shoulders. He had once come home, in the 'nineties, with a pet racoon. Mr. Warner's grandmother knitted Uncle Lawrence a vest once a year, and letters came at rare intervals. From curiosity, family feeling, sensibility, perhaps from mere chance, Mr. Warner's interest in his uncle was aroused. He wrote to him, received delighted replies, and in due course an invitation to visit Canada. When Mr. Warner was in his second year at Cambridge the invitation was repeated and, since it was probable the opportunity would not recur, Mr. Warner decided to accept it. Uncle Lawrence's material position was not clearly known; he lived on an island in Lake Erie which was hard to find on the atlases. When the boat reached the jetty at Pelee the young Englishman saw a stiff figure, like a wooden soldier, waiting for him, the size of whose head and shape of whose nose proclaimed him a kinsman. A rusty, broken pair of spectacles, held together by sticking-plaster, were on his nose, and a cap far too small for him on his head, and he was speechless with emotion at seeing anyone of his own after so many years of isolation.

> The worn tag about blood being thicker than water I felt once more to be utterly true. So much so that it was not essential to our sympathy that I should have the power of understanding my uncle. Sympathy existed, and I found this fact an immense relief. The next thing I realised with a slight shock was Lawrence's obvious poverty. . . . Oliver, do I speak Canadian? . . . Surely it doesn't matter? After all, we're in Canada. . . . When his first excited huskiness died down Lawrence spoke musically. . . . He quickly shed his few Canadianisms which did not suit him, and recaptured, stiltedly at first, the way of speech his father had taught with such precision.

* * *

Mr. Warner found himself living in a cottage piled with papers, falling into irreparable decay, and swarming with cats. He was put to sleep in the only bed, between the only pair of sheets. The wire gauze window screens were broken; the rooms crawled with insects and buzzed with flies. There was scarcely any food in the house, and at their meals of tea and bread and jam Uncle Lawrence ate nothing. He would gaze fixedly at Mr. Warner and say:

> All my life I've waited for this moment.

Lawrence, it turned out, had been wearing his broken spectacles for years, and was afraid of taking them off lest he should knock them over in finding them again. He was practically blind. The greatest change brought into his life by his nephew was being taken to the mainland and supplied with a new pair of spectacles. Mr. Warner was young and adapted himself quickly to his environment, and soon got to know his uncle's circle of friends, who turned the kitchen of his old shack into their clubroom in the evening. During his stay, uncle and nephew went on numerous expeditions, once with some friendly but somewhat amateurish bootleggers, more often by steamer to the United States shore of the lake, where they amused themselves by eating ice-creams and having their fortunes told. Soon Uncle Lawrence's position becomes clear: his poverty being counterbalanced by the good will of his neighbours and by a certain prestige due to his readiness to help others, to his education and his honesty. When the last day comes for their parting, uncle and nephew sit drinking glasses of the heavy local wine.

> "The wine, or the evening, seems to have loosed my tongue to-night," said Lawrence. "Yet still I don't feel able to express myself. That is the key to almost everything ill, I think: lack of expression. In some way it has always been denied me. If I have anything to say it has been stifled. . . . I don't suppose you will ever realise what your visit has meant to me. It has been brief, and I have done little for you, but you will understand. That you thought I was worth coming to see is to me all that matters.

Mr. Warner has not been afraid of sentiment; as a result his curious little book is at moments extremely moving. It is written without the slightest affectation or falsity, and every line is true. The exact truthfulness of the narrative is, however, a source of weakness as well as a strength: the reader's interest is inevitably greater at the account of the arrival at the island, and of meeting Uncle Lawrence, and slowly decreases as the book goes on. Mr. Warner's sympathy with his uncle and his uncle's friends prevents the reader from ever feeling bored, and description of the appearances of things is often interrupted by reflections. When he was on his way home he wondered how much his family would want to know.

> I found myself unexpectedly puzzled. I had adapted myself thoroughly enough to Lawrence's circumstances on Pelee to see that his condition did not seem unnatural. I soon found myself wondering whether anything *was* seriously wrong. This was not a blinking of the eyes, but a perception that in his own way Lawrence was living a life as he had made it, and was possessed of a love for his surroundings.

The story is one of the most charming and individual things I have read for a long time.

DAVID GARNETT

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NEW NOVELS

The Daughter. By BESSIE BREUER. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.
The Trouble with Tigers. By WILLIAM SAROYAN. *Faber.* 7s. 6d.
Aunt Betty. By MORCHARD BISHOP. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.
Revue. By BEVERLEY NICHOLS. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

Miss Breuer's theme—cerebral *versus* instinctive living—suggests Lawrence, but her sympathies are far from Laurentian. The situation is this: Carlotta Kane, an American divorcée in her forties, pretty, popular and terrified of age, travels around the world staying in expensive hotels and accompanied by her daughter Katy, a reserved, intellectual girl, to whom people seem commonplace compared with the characters in books. Carlotta's morals are easy; Katy, inexperienced herself, accepts her mother's love affairs without positive disapproval. In mid-winter they seek the warm South and put up in a remote Florida town on the Gulf of Mexico. Katy has barely unpacked her Rilke and Auden before her mother is accepted by the youthful society of the coast—a drunken, amorous group gifted with animal spirits and a simple appetite for life which dazzles the civilized Northerners. Of this group Charlie is the superb figurehead, physically reckless and splendid, mentally—well, why worry about that? While he has the inevitable affair with her mother, Katy surrenders to the delights of "community," drinking, bathing, laughing and petting with the rest of the friendly gang. The book conveys brilliantly the feeling of intoxication with which the reserved at last abandon their reserve: anybody who at school has been unexpectedly lifted out of solitude and whirled into momentary popularity will recognise the truth of Miss Breuer's picture. Katy, her defensive angularity shed, now becomes the natural target of Charlie's attentions; they have a passionate affair which almost leads to marriage. The relationships between these two and between mother and daughter are explored with unusual subtlety, and Katy herself is something of an achievement—by the end we know her well enough to recognise her anywhere. And it is through the intelligent and acute sensibility of her heroine that the author is able to show us the prejudice and inertia which is the reverse of all this Southern ease and geniality. We see a union leader's attempts to organise a body of miserably paid and squalidly housed fishermen; and a vivid and bitter chapter is devoted to the administration of justice in the county court. The thought of lynching hovers in the background, and there is a glimpse of the silent Indians "pushed step by step into the Gulf." All this has structural as well as merely atmospheric value, for it reveals the unbridgable gulf between the girl's reflective and moral intelligence and the instinctive amorality of her Southern lover. The sun which ripens also corrupts.

Have I suggested that *The Daughter* is a masterpiece? Unfortunately it is not, the principal trouble being the over-emphasis of Miss Breuer's style. An intensely self-conscious writer, she often strikes out a poetic phrase or image; but her misses are more frequent than her hits, and her most ambitious passages are obscure and often verbless. I refrain from quoting the opening paragraph of Chapter Ten, because it would put people off a book which they might enjoy; but I beg Miss Breuer to look at that long, sprawling sentence, and seriously to consider whether that is a good way to write. More soberly written, *The Daughter* would have been a first-rate novel.

Mr. Saroyan resumes his pulpit. He is a natural orator, and reminds me a little of that Irishman at Hyde Park Corner, Bonar Thompson I believe he is called. They both have the extraordinary faculty of being able to go on and on, holding forth by the hour about whatever comes into their heads, without direction and without relevance but also, strange as it may seem, without dullness. Occasionally they pull themselves together and deliver a powerful harangue about a specific subject, but soon they are off again, cavorting down some entertaining by-path. There is one difference, however: the Irish orator strikes me as frivolous, the Armenian writer as fundamentally serious. He is simply the somewhat mad spokesman of a more than somewhat mad world; he has a wide Whitmanesque love of the great hopeless, helpless mass of American workers and loafers; he hates Wall Street and the rich, not at all for the proper Marxian reasons, but because they are so silly and so dead. Knowing every back alley and dusty corner in the continent, he still can't keep his spirits down. This is how he sees the world:

> the garbage pile, the slop heap, the rat-hole, ornamentally ridiculed by the Corinthian pillar and the Gothic window, yippee. The holy world, and do I love it? Do I like the lousy place? Am I fond of hamburgers?

"Gentlemen," he bawls to the City Editors, "meet the nobility of the Street. Talk about something else besides . . . economics. Talk about hamburgers and horses and the guy who bought a Chinese lottery ticket with his last dime . . ." And talk he does; if someone new pushes through the swing doors in the middle of his speech, he has no difficulty in altering the tune to fit him in too. Being a born writer, he is readable, however discursive; but all the same, I wish he would grow up and construct. In his earlier books there were stories which make everything in this one look ramshackle. His manner is running away with him: even he cannot make me read this:

> The room cold and the moment clear and cold and tragic. The presence. The word unwritten. The tiger, unseen. Brother, I mean death. The red headline across the emptiness of time.

His writing is beginning to resemble the talk of a drunken intellectual who discovers at 2.30 a.m. the great, simple, explanatory, unifying idea about the world and tries to put it across. What is that perpetual "brother" but the transatlantic equivalent of "old boy" or even "my dear"?

Back to our right little, tight little isle. *Aunt Betty* is a characteristic English novel about a lower middle-class family recently risen from trade into the professions. Mr. Bishop admires the institution of the family, laments its present decay, and has designed his book to show how the death of Betty Ransome brings about the disintegration of a family who were barely held together by their love for her. His opening chapters successfully present the 94-year-old Mrs. Bryant and her unhappy niece, Mrs. Davidson; in fact all the characters are done with discernment and skill. Where Mr. Bishop fails is in his management of the plot, which was obviously liable to resolve itself into a series of episodic quarrels, and does; but at the beginning of Book Two he gratuitously focuses attention on another of his technical problems:

> . . . the more I . . . pondered over this problem of her [Aunt Betty's] presentation—a presentation which I deemed to be essential to the structure of the book as I had planned it—the more baffled I grew . . . I don't know how, if at all, I should have surmounted my difficulty if the matter had not been suddenly taken out of my hands by a quite amazing stroke of good fortune, which came to me in the shape of a bulky letter from my young acquaintance. . . .

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NELSON

The device of the "bulky letter" is particularly transparent, because Book One was not related in the first person at all. The rest of the novel contains some good things, notably a description of Mrs. Davidson "spending a day" at Harrods, but the narrative has lost its drive. I think, too, that Mr. Bishop was wrong to make his family so uniformly disagreeable and unattractive; we do not expect an apologist for family life to hold the author's view that "the natural characters of most people are not generally very amiable." It may be true, but it is not the supposition upon which the ideal of family affection is based.

Revue is *Evensong* all over again, with a temperamental young leading lady (Thelma Ganges) in place of the temperamental old *prima donna*, and a fresh and clean-limbed young journalist from Australia (Robin Frost) in place of the clean-limbed and fresh young photographer from the States. Robin writes a revue for Thelma, and the book describes the fantastic complications that invariably precede the rise of the first-night curtain. Mr. Nichols knows even more about the world of revue than he does about the world of opera, and when he allows himself to be malicious the result is exceedingly amusing. But when he allows himself to be tender—well, you all know what Young Love and Spring Blossoms do to Mr. Nichols's style. If you don't, listen to this, from Chapter VII "Enter Fay":

> When he first saw Fay Pearl, standing on the stage, he felt that by some odd celestial coincidence a small truant angel had fallen off the edge of a cloud and had tumbled down and down, with the light of the sunset sparkling on her wings. And that when the roof of the theatre had opened to receive her, she had drifted gracefully to the footlights, taken one glance at the strange mortals by whom she was confronted, and decided to play a little trick on them.

Robin takes Fay to Kew to look at—however did you guess?—yes, the daffodils:

> And as they walked forward, the woods seemed filled with Pagan laughter, and the daffodils caught the ripple of that laughter and echoed it. No longer did they sway in solemn devotion . . . they fluttered, pirouetted, twisted, turned. They gave themselves unashamedly to the wind, and flaunted their naked beauty to the adoring sky.

It takes a strong nerve to face Mr. Nichols on the subject of daffodils.

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MARMADUKE PICKTHALL

Loyal Enemy: The Life of Marmaduke Pickthall. By ANNE FREMANTLE. *Hutchinson.* 10s. 6d.

When the T. E. Lawrence letters were published there arose a general tendency to lay the Lawrence legend, and to translate him from the high romantic peak, where popular imagination had placed him, into terms of ordinary men. Marmaduke Pickthall, a convert to Muslim faith, was one of the few men who could have met Lawrence on an entirely equal basis, yet he shrunk from any meeting, and, despite an ungrudged admiration, preserved an instinctive dislike for Lawrence's method. This whole difference between the two men is summed up in a sentence from Pickthall's review of the *Seven Pillars*. "Where is the Arab Empire he imagined? The dream has vanished and it broke his heart. But it was bound to vanish. It was untrue to life, made of personal ideas and not noted intentions." Pickthall was a man who noted intentions, personal ideas became to him like morsels of food passing the lips of monotheist Arabs, he felt that they might become a pleasure from which he must dissociate his soul. He was an unmystical, unquestioning ascetic.

To a great many people Pickthall's name will be completely new, yet together with Lawrence he had probably one of the largest personal followings of any European in the East. He first went out when he was nineteen, staying in Jaffa and Jerusalem, where he was profoundly disgusted with the bickerings of the European communities, and scandalised them by dressing as an Arab, and spending his time with Arabs, thus fulfilling E. N. Forster's canon that it is only in youth or through the memories of youth that the lines of the Oriental landscape can be seen. He had a remarkable aptitude for languages, and learnt Arabic on this visit so well that he was never recognised as a European. He travelled greatly until he was thirty, staying for a while in Cairo, with Lady Valda Machell whose husband was adviser to the Prime Minister, and acted as a barometer of the state of native feeling, passing through the bazaars dressed as a sweetmeat seller. In the intervals he was in England, writing novels, and after several unsuccessful attempts at books with English settings, he wrote *Saïd the Fisherman*, which was an instantaneous success, and became the first of many others so acute in their portrayal of everyday life of the Oriental standpoint, that they are still the classics to the Eastern keystone, and, hardest test of all, have become set books for the Egyptian Civil Service.

The travels went still farther eastward until Pickthall reached Constantinople, where he was at once impressed by the character of Turks, so unlike the popular conception of it. He was already acquainted with their potential administrative ability and their popularity with Muslims from experience in Egypt, and in Constantinople he developed a great feeling for the Turks, which became a *leit motiv* for the rest of his life. He ranged himself at once alongside the Young Turks, and was furious at our betrayal of them to Russia and her Balkan satellites; at the outbreak of war he continued this policy, and perpetually battered at the Foreign Office, where he had several friends, in a vain endeavour to stop Turkey coming in on the side of the Central Powers, and to prevent the setting up of a new spiritual head for Muslims at Mecca to replace the Kalif, and thus promote the Arab Nationalist movement.

It was in 1914, when he was 39, that Pickthall embraced Islam, and was appointed Imam to a London mosque. He was still training when the war ended, and in 1920 he was offered the editorship of a Bombay Nationalist daily. He accepted; the circulation was trebled. He co-operated closely with Ghandi, and became one of the leading members of the Nationalist movement, addressing meetings of up to 30,000 Indians, and working desperately to secure the release of unjustly convicted Nationalists. In Bombay both he and his wife suffered from the complete ostracism of the Anglo-Indian faction, with the exception of Lord Lloyd, the Governor, and the English director of the art institute. Just when Pickthall was leaving for England the paper was sued for damages in an almost fictitious case, and was fined £15,000. He came back to India for the judgment, expecting imprisonment, and stayed to raise the fine. While he was still there, the Nizam of Hyderabad, who is incidentally the richest man in the world, offered Pickthall the headmastership of the largest school in his State; while he was there a long-envisaged project was achieved, the publication of a translation of the Koran, for which the Nizam gave him two years' leave, while he settled details with the pundits of Alexandria. He returned to be

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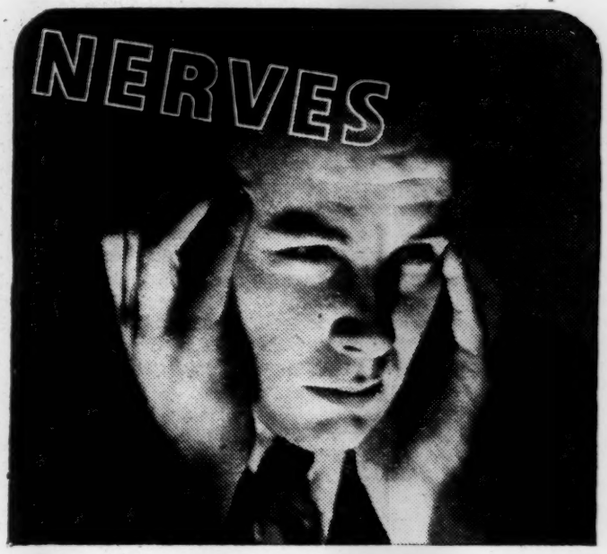

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appointed Comptroller to the Nizam's brother; he died in 1936, a year after he had left India, sixty-one years old.

The author of this book knew Marmaduke Pickthall very intimately, possibly too well, for she has found it difficult to sift her material with discernment: it is all valuable. She has a dangerous, and justifiable, enthusiasm for her subject, which has led her to take some measures, such as a very arbitrary whitewashing of the Turks, which would hardly find favour with her hero. But Pickthall's reticence, his unending activities, and his deep insight into the Mohammedan outlook, are all sympathetically divulged, though it is the reader who makes most of the discoveries, and that despite the fact that the author has been very conscientious with settings and backgrounds. The book is rambling; it could be condensed to two-thirds of its 400 pages, but one may welcome it as likely to lead to a better understanding of Marmaduke Pickthall, and to increase the popularity of his novels.

RAYMOND ALDERSON

"DESCRIBE YOUR MOST ENJOYABLE HOLIDAY"

Borneo Jungle. Edited by TOM HARRISSON. *Lindsay Drummond.* 15*s.*

The average age of the party was twenty years, the work they did was not very important. Still, after an Expedition a popular book must be produced, so here it is: *Borneo Jungle*, an account of the Oxford University Exploration Club's Expedition to Sarawak. "Above all, it was the natives, the Punans and Kenyahs and Kayans, who kept us extrovert and gave us experience which, thinking about it now for the first time in years, was surely the most vital and valuable any person of twenty could have had." That is a verdict which all Oxford, exploring or non-exploring, holds for a time about its experience in those golden years: walking home through San Sebastian at seven in the morning while the streets were being hosed, down the Banbury road while the milkmen move from house to house, taking a trip on a sailing barge to Antwerp, bumming rides on lorries up the Great North Road; it all seems immensely important, the revelation of the turning world can never have happened to anyone else ever before. Perhaps there is no moment quite so vital and valuable to the individual as that in which he is accepted by the world at large as an adult. The personnel of the expedition were *in statu pupillari* at Oxford but they were tuans in Borneo, to their very evident delight. A white official of the Sarawak administration, however, made the mistake of thinking that undergraduates were still uninteresting even after they had travelled so far, and the incident rankles after all these years. So that official gets beaten over the head with a story by Somerset Maugham. But for the most part it is roses all the way, the natives accept the young men as drinking, joking, and loving companions without qualification. Mr. Harrisson vanishes into the jungles as a nice boy from Harrow and emerges as a tough egg who can stand up to the local tough eggs and the jungle itself, Mr. Hartley becomes a blood brother of head hunters, Mr. Shackleton climbs the unclimbable mountain and comes out of the moss forest a real explorer ready for comparison with anyone.

The book is in the form of a collection of articles contributed by the members of the party. They vary enormously: Mr. Harrisson produces a crowd of notions which rush about like a film mob, shaking their fists and running in all directions. Ideas, too, which might have come to him anywhere, or even after a nice think at home. Only occasionally does he let the reader come near his feelings, but when he does the jungle comes alive. In the articles by John Ford and Hartley the jungle is not much more than a gaudy backdrop to a crowded social life, while to Patrick Synge the jungle is everything, shaping the lives and minds of the people who live in it. His contribution, in the rich style associated with the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society (it has affinities with the best kind of fruit cake), deals with botany and the plant dictated character of the predominant designs in the native arts. It is a happy relief from the anecdotal character of the book. Mr. Shackleton writes like a real explorer. The photographs are excellent.

Readers may recall a poem by Mr. John Betjeman entitled *The Flight from Bootle* which ends:

> Time enough! or not enough time!
> Lillian you wait in vain;
> Alice will not have a rough time,
> Nor be quite the same again.

Lillian will be dying to hear what happened to Alice when she does come across her again, but I doubt if even she would be ready to pay 15*s.* for the information. Growing up is an interesting process, but accounts of growing pains are only too easy to come by.

ANTHONY WEST

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MEDIEVAL IRELAND

A History of Medieval Ireland. By EDMUND CURTIS. *Methuen.* 15*s.* net.

No real scholar, it appears, has covered fully the subject of medieval Ireland before Mr. Curtis. The late Dr. Goddard Orpen had in his four volumes, *Ireland Under the Normans*, carried the story from 1166 up to 1333, whereas Mr. Curtis has begun with the last of the High Kings in 1086 and brought us up to 1513, the eve of the Tudor reconquest. A Gaelic scholar himself, he writes with more sympathy and knowledge of the native race and of their language, law, and culture than Orpen did, and in the period untouched by Orpen he has a far harder task to perform, for there was here a lamentable lack of sources. The destruction of the Dublin Four Courts in 1922 might well have discouraged the boldest of investigators.

The impression of most general interest that is, or should be, left upon the reader of the book, is this—that medieval Ireland was not so very medieval after all. Not merely was it obviously the basis of modern Ireland where everybody is very conscious of being "Norman," "Cromwellian," "Gaelic," etc., in descent, but it very curiously reproduces the picture of Ireland since 1700 and up to our present Eire and (or !) Ulster. Three nations or semi-nations are discovered between 1200 and 1500, the Irish or Gaels, the Anglo-Norman landowners, and the Anglo-Irish oligarchy of the towns. There is a "Sudeten" of four Eastern Counties in which alone England has control, and has a genuinely loyal population. The Anglo-Normans, rejoicing in their delusion that they have got the Gaels under for ever, achieve a Home Rule movement and a free Parliament in Dublin, which Parliament is finally (1495) destroyed by Poyning's Law, as Grattan's was by Pitt and Fitzgibbon.

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The parallel need not be pushed too far, but it certainly does call up both the Anglo-Irish Nationalism of Swift, Berkeley, Grattan and Flood and the Union Jack Pale which has now shifted from Meath and Dublin to the six North-Eastern Counties. But when will Ireland achieve a moral unity as apart from political nationality? How is it that she never enjoyed a few centuries of small-scale independence like Scotland, which later on she might have surrendered on advantageous terms to a greater unity of these islands. The answer must be sought not in one page but all through the pages of Mr. Curtis's book.

It is part of the book's merits that it makes the medieval divisions so clear and so apposite to the modern ones. Mr. Curtis has worked valiantly for the Gaelic side of his story, and even if Gaeldom remains at the end a welter, an unedited country, "swept with confused alarms of struggle and fight," we perceive that the O'Connors, the O'Neills, and the other warriors of Erin, for all their particularism and endless altercation among themselves, were the unconquerable, the real thing in Ireland. "The idea," as Hegel would say, may have entered into Irish history only with the dynamic Anglo-Irish; but the Anglo-Irish, whether under Strongbow at the first, or under the great Earl of Kildare at the close of Mr. Curtis's period, were too few to build a modern State in Ireland. They held too little of the land, and, like the patriotic Protestants of the eighteenth century, they too easily believed that they had the natives and all Ireland for their heritage.

As is well known, native Ireland came into fashion in the eighteenth century; it had also been a cult with the "degenerate" or "old English" of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But Mr. Curtis does not believe in the epigram "More Irish than the Irish," as applied to them, although Irish Unionists and even English tourists in modern times have often replenished the ranks of Irish scholars and Gaelic revivalists. This is what Mr. Curtis says about the Desmonds, Burkes and others of the fifteenth century:

> The colonists did not lose all pride in their Englishry. Right up to the fall of the House of Kildare the "Old English" prided themselves on a sort of colonial patriotism. . . . They might well have rejected England as Scotland did under the Bruces . . . but they never openly broke with the legal authority at Westminster. . . Some of their Gaelic aspects were of necessity. Thus, while everywhere they retained English feudal tenures, rules of land succession and inheritance, they took over, as something too deeply rooted and indeed too suited to the country to be displaced, the old Gaelic communal organisation.

No one could have made a better story than Mr. Curtis makes of the whole perplexing theme—a nominal English lordship of which the King was a permanent absentee. He gives us many pages of reflection and entertainment, but it must be admitted that the paucity of real events and the quantity of names and facts make medieval Ireland contrast sadly with, say, medieval England or France. Ireland, however, is so interested in its own history and its own pedigrees (is there not still a prosperous Office of Arms in Dublin?) that a respectable public for the work may be predicted. Messrs. Methuen have produced it attractively, and, among maps and other aids for readers and students, genealogical lists of the great historic names, both Norman and Gaelic, of medieval times will be welcomed. J. M. HONE

DAILY LIFE IN LAPUTA

I Married a German. By MADELEINE KENT. *Allen and Unwin.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

During the war, on a part of the Galician front, the Austrian High Command, in retaliation for the supposedly mortifying attitude of the German army, forbade any Austrian to give a German a lift. A friend of mine, driving up to the front, was hailed by a lonely soldier who begged to be taken along. My friend reminded him of this regulation, upon which the German exclaimed in despair, "Then what is to become of me? All our troops hereabouts are Prussians and I'm a Bavarian."

Miss Kent, by the same token, might have called her book *I Married a Saxon*, since of Germany as a whole she had little opportunity to judge, except through Saxon eyes. She admits the fundamental regionalism of German life, but goes on to make generalisations about Germany as a whole, some of which suffer from a conviction which she shares with the ninth century chronicler Eginhard that Saxons echo the other nations of Germany in that they are "of a ferocious nature, practising the cult of demons, enemies of our religion who saw nothing dishonourable in violating and transgressing laws human and divine." She arrived in Dresden an apostle of the New Realism, settled among Social Democrats in a working-class *Siedlung*, eager to be appreciative, eager to be in the vanguard; and she was soon disillusioned. It did not need the Nazis to destroy her hopes of the Republic, and one of the excellent points of her book is that she is severely just to the German Socialists, with whom her sympathies lie. Through their weaknesses she makes a good case against the social bias of all Germans. "They [the workers] were less to blame than the intellectuals who, while stuffing their heads with new un-German ideas, bound to get them into trouble, had neglected to eradicate from their docile characters the blindly obedient instincts bred by centuries of oppression." Of oppression, that is, by Socialist standards. Incapable of sustained initiative the Weimar Republic undoubtedly was; and commenting on the unexpected collapse of Severing before Von Papen Miss Kent asks:

> Was that the way the new Germans, who had so proudly substituted Reason for the old savage racial instincts, were going to behave? It began to look as though hysteria, disease though it was, was integral to the German constitution. Cured of hysteria, it simply lost its vitality.

In the latter parts of this fascinating book there are no sensational atrocities, only a damning series of conscientious exasperations. Miss Kent and her husband were dismally, not on the whole unkindly, stupidly and unsuccessfully harried. The legend of German efficiency, at any rate in the provinces, crumbles as usual before the facts. And if the pure silliness of their enemies seems too great to be true, there is Frau Lips telling the same tale. One of them is involved in months of litigation and serious danger because she slandered the German race by crying "*Barbar!*" to a ruffian who talked of shooting her cat. The husband of the other has to flee from Germany when he is found guilty of calling his Nazi successor at the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum an "utter idiot." The main scandal of the implied conversation is that it took place in the lavatory of a night club.

The deep currents of modern Germany, it would seem, sweep past non-Nazis unperceived; there is no hint in this book of any idealism, any virility, any national revival. A good many crooks and cowards bob on to the surface; all round, the walls close in on an ever-smaller world of the spirit. There is a curious pin-like ambition in the air, but no aim, no view, no common sense. Loyalty, intelligent apprehension, disinterest, do not seem to have been attacked particularly, but to have vanished in the general bankruptcy of individualism, the strange foreshortening of life all round. A little more sympathy with German problems might have evoked a less uniform gloom; but then commentators used to living in Europe must always be at sea in Laputa. ALAN PRYCE-JONES

DETECTIVE STORIES AND THRILLERS

The Stoneware Monkey. By AUSTIN FREEMAN. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Case of the Shoplifter's Shoe. By ERLE STANLEY GARDNER. *Cassell.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Off With Her Head. By G. D. H. and M. COLE. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

He Could Not Have Slipped. By FRANCIS BEEDING. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Four Fingers. By LYNN BROCK. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

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The Dead Harm No One. By E. BAKER QUINN. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Quest of Julian Day. By DENNIS WHEATLEY. *Hutchinson.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

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policeman is murdered. We then proceed with Dr. Oldfield to London, where we find Peter Gannet, a most modernistic potter, and his stoneware monstrosity (of which two photographs are enclosed). Gannet shows symptoms of arsenical poisoning but recovers under Dr. Oldfield's care; and as a grateful patient he instructs the doctor in the rudiments of the potter's art. By the time Gannet and a friend of his disappear simultaneously, leaving a nasty mess in the studio for Oldfield to clear up, our diagnosis should be confirmed. A clear case of ——, and Thorndyke must be called in. He is; and the dissection of *The Stoneware Monkey* proceeds without a hitch to reveal how right we were all along. Only when the surgeons are peeling off their rubber gloves and discussing the modern trend of Art, is it time to cock an eyebrow. I surmise that Mr. Freeman prefers Alma Tadema to Picasso; and that's that.

If Erle Stanley Gardner would alter his Perry Mason model for better or worse it might be possible to find something new to say about it. As it is, *The Case of the Shoplifter's Shoe* follows its predecessors as closely as one Ford V8 does another along the assembly line. The chassis is the same invariably, the fittings and gadgets are standardised down to the inappropriate but flashy title. Once again the cleverest part of the book is the Court scene, where Perry Mason runs rings round the District Attorney and cross-examines the police witnesses into dithering futility. Della Street is the only character Mr. Gardner occasionally fumbles. This time she gets a kiss from Perry on the last page, but as she was engaged to marry the man two books ago she won't get a ticket for speeding.

The Coles must have gone to see *Night Must Fall*. The dramatic possibilities of a decapitated head in a parcel are enough to give any detective story a good send-off, and the Coles have had the discretion to deliver their parcel to an Oxford don at an Oxford college, and to fill it with the head of a beautiful but immoral woman. This opening scene is the best moment in *Off with Her Head*. Afterwards there is some fun with the College authorities, some "tender" (as opposed to "tough") lovemaking between a modern young lady reporter and Inspector Fairford (who now deputises for Superintendent Wilson), and a choice of criminals between an obvious villain—he makes a pass at the young lady—a herring with a red light tied to his tail, and a dark horse. The jury ought to be able to reach their verdict without leaving the box.

A new motive for murder is introduced by Francis Beeding, or rather a new motive for a crime which degenerates into triple murder. The reader's fancy is often tickled by such novelties, but it is rare that they carry much conviction to his mind; and the criminal in *He Could Not Have Slipped* is handicapped like a villain in melodrama. The story, however, is exciting and the characters lively; while the setting, in the mountains round Geneva and the League of Nations cosmopolitan bureaucracy, is described in realistic detail with all the gusto that derives from intimate acquaintance.

The body of a luscious authoress is found in a motor smash in the New Forest with a couple of dead New Forest ponies alongside. Better still, the lady is found to have been shot through the heart and the car reeks of brandy. Such is the opening of *Four Fingers*; and it is nice to know that the lady's husband has just previously escaped from a lunatic asylum where she had had him confined for years, although it does not mean a thing—or does it? Alas! when a writer of Mr. Lynn Brock's calibre allows himself to ginger up his plots with a hypodermic injection of gangsters, you will be lucky if you can make head or tail of what is going on. Amid scenes of confusion we hang round the Bournemouth neighbourhood in the company of Kither and Venn, Mr. Brock's leash of detectives, attending endless interviews; for in spite of the gangsters, Four Fingers and Co., Mr. Brock's real *forte* is dialogue and not dramatic action. The *dénouement* is such a foregone conclusion that the book is best classified as a talkative thriller, easy to read but not very easy to get excited about.

The exotic setting of *The Hush Hush Murders* on an American troopship crossing the Pacific was the justification for Mrs. Yates' first novel. Apparently she has since been stationed at an American naval base in the Caribbean, from which *Death Sends a Cable* and Mrs. Yates her second detective thriller. The plot is exciting and straightforward, the characters vivid although sentimentalised, and the narrative written in a spirited but overpoweringly girlish style. Still it is pleasant to join the American Navy with Mrs. Yates and see the sea, as well as the girls.

The last three books on the list are unadulterated thrillers *Maginot Line Murder* is of topical interest, describing the defeat of a vast scheme for sabotage in the Maginot Line by the counter-espionage of Papa Pontivy and Mr. Newman. Mr. Newman writes in perfect thriller style with a smooth, flat surface, beneath which readers can peer at the most fabulous human behaviour as safely and composedly as a fish behind the plate-glass of an aquarium. Miss Baker Quinn uses the American technique less effectively; the note of hysteria rises higher and higher, while the hero watches his lady-love being convicted of murder, to the inevitable accompaniment of liquor, sleeplessness and fisticuffs. Most of this riotous living occurs oddly enough in the purlieus of South Kensington. Mr. Wheatley has fixed on Egypt for the adventures of his modern Don Juan, expelled from the Diplomatic Service. Hashish, white slavery and the treasure of Cambyses provide the driving force of this long epic, but there is no rape. The book will sell in tens of thousands, as the author of *The Quest of Julian Day* is our champion exponent of the Trocadero style of all-in writing.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

THE DANUBE

The Struggle for the Danube. By ROBERT MACHRAY. *Allen and Unwin.* 12s. 6d.

Storms Over the Danube. By JOHN DEMPSEY and W. L. JOY *Selwyn and Blount.* 12s. 6d.

The Danube Flows Through Fascism. By WILLIAM VAN TIL. *Scribners.* 10s. 6d.

Most people see the Danube for the first time at Vienna; and are disappointed. Either they mistake the drab and narrow Danube Canal for the genuine article, or, having at last made the long tram journey out to the city's edge, look in vain for the charm and colour a schooling of Strauss has led them to imagine in the straight, snow-muddied giant that rushes down between the unpicturesque banks.

It is not till they have watched it and lived with it at many other stages in its sixteen-hundred-mile journey to the Black Sea, that they begin to feel it is a river with a character and hypnotic power like no other in Europe. The easiest way of discovering this is to take a lazy trip downstream on one of the comfortable passenger boats of the various national lines, and watch willows and herons and orchards, cliffs, ruins and floodlit cities slip by in long days and nights of almost noiseless travel. Mr. Van Til, however, scorns such a sissified way of exploring the world, and there is no doubt that if you have the rude health and the gusto that crackles from every page of his book, there is nothing to compare with a canoe built for two. In breezy fashion, with a good many good American cracks at Fascists and frontier bureaucrats, he describes the journey that he and his Czech-born wife made, from the highest navigable point in Germany down to Belgrade, in the *Long Island Duck II*, which had come with them, in a neat state of collapse, all the way from Ohio.

If Mr. Van Til had gone one year later, he would have encountered one frontier post less to check the *Duck's* happy-go-lucky career; and if he goes this summer—well, perhaps the passport nuisance will have been all but abolished, one swastika-blazoned visa covering the whole river. But in the summer of 1937 a gay variety of flags and gendarmes' uniforms and ways of spelling Customs House kept him only too conscious of the chief problem of the Danube, a problem that is always frustrating the economic role for which the river has been cast by nature: the mixture of races and national jealousies along its banks. *Storms over the Danube* is interesting, because it describes from first-hand experience an important episode in the break-up of one organisation, the Habsburg Empire, which very nearly solved the problem. Mr. Dempsey has no particular literary skill, and neither impartial nor profound opinions about Danubian politics; but his glimpses of Hungary in revolution, and of Bela Kun, whom he knew personally, are tantalising. It is only a pity that, in spite of an agreeable Irish quickness to see the other man's point of view, anti-socialist prejudice keeps him from appreciating fully what was going on under his nose. There is also—or is it my fancy?—a certain mystery about his own activities which fogs the narrative from time to time: but the public no doubt expects at least a whiff of spy-story in any Britisher's account of adventures abroad. Mr. Dempsey's truth, however, is better than fiction: he describes taking part in an early Hungarian film under the budding Korda's direction, in the very middle of the war, on the shores of Lake Balaton. I defy anybody to imagine a Nazi German being able to repeat such a performance at Elstree in the coming war.

Bela Kun's Republic was an attempt to solve the Danubian

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problem on Soviet lines. It is not often remembered how nearly Communism spread to Austria and how high, if it had, the chances would have been of a Communist chain of states from Bavaria to Russia maintaining itself. As it was, another solution had to be tried, and the Allied Powers drew their map of independent capitalist states blocking the Bolshevik drive to the West and the Pan-German drive to the Black Sea. Mr. Machray's book gives a detailed month-to-month history of the last hectic ten years of this phase, right up to the spring of 1938 and the final failure of the experiment with the Anschluss, when all the plans for establishing some unity among these states, and therefore some defensive strength, Tardieu plans, Hodza plans, and the rest, vanished in the triumph of the Pan-German idea. *The Struggle for the Danube* is disappointingly pedestrian, and by its studied avoidance of any real criticism or analysis of events, fails to produce a clearly intelligible pattern. It is valuable for its catalogue completeness, and also for bringing out the bewildering intensity of conferences, press campaigns, diplomatic, military, and economic moves and counter-moves by which Central Europe's *status quo* was preserved for a decade. All the medicines and poultices only resulted in the death of the patient. If Hitler's new Empire extends within the next two years right down to the Delta, it will have produced as valid an economic solution for the Danubian basin as any that preceded it; but it can have solved neither the national nor the social problems, and history will ultimately demand, one cannot help thinking, a yet more radical reorganisation.

JOHN LEHMANN

Travels in the North. By KAREL CAPEK. *Allen and Unwin.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Capek was a sympathetic democrat, and from his point of view the Northern races led the perfect life—no worry about politics, no armaments, pastoral peoples, slow, friendly, simple. Most of us would agree; the Danes, the Swedes and the Norwegians are particularly charming. Also, an escape from Central Europe into what must seem a different world would be more than ever welcome. *Travels in the North* has not the human interest nor the brightness of a book like *Letters from Iceland*, but it is very readable, a bit on the whimsical, mildly philosophical side. The translators may have modelled their style too closely on A. A. Milne. On the other hand Capek has a real feeling for scenery which reminds one strongly of passages in D. H. Lawrence's letters:

> The sun grows warmer, fissures rumble in the glacier; right at the foot of the blue ice a pink campion is flowering sweetly. I tell you the world is terribly disconcerting; one day when I shall recall everything that I have seen, I shan't believe that it was true. Only we are lucky to have seen it now; they say that the glacier is always getting smaller, perhaps in twenty thousand years it will be gone, said the styrman; but let us hope that another Ice Age will arrive before then. Up above, that glacier, they say, covers two hundred square miles; well then, I must touch it with my finger—two hundred square miles, that now is something worth while.

Among the reasons he gives for his journey Capek mentions a search for the pure "Aryan" type—"People talk such a lot nowadays of nations and races; at least you ought to have a look at them. For my part, for instance, I went to have a glimpse of pure-blooded Germans; I have brought away the impression that it is a splendid and brave race, which loves freedom and peace, makes a point of personal dignity, will not allow itself to be ordered about too much, and has not the slightest need of someone to lead it." Capek enjoyed his journey, except for an excursion steamer full of American revivalists; he took everything in and it is all poured out again on to two hundred and fifty pages of his easy, colloquial style. "Marvels of engineering" left him cold; steel, industrial exploitation—these were too near home, too reminiscent of a world of frontiers, gangster armies, unemployment and war. A Czechoslovakian and friend of Masaryk, he looked first of all for a happy country, unregimented and unwarlike, a perfect democracy. Wooden houses, a simple, healthy people, friendly and brave, beautiful scenery, Capek found them all. It is a pity that his drawings, although they are quite good, do not convey this beauty.

Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas Discussed. By ERIC BLOM. *Dent.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Originally issued in brochures with the separate volumes of gramophone records of the Beethoven Sonata Society, these analyses are now republished in one volume, together with interludes describing the various stages of the composer's life and art. Mr. Blom does the job skilfully and comprehensibly to the layman, quoting wherever difficulties might arise, and altogether making a valuable contemporary addition to the literature of the subject. He goes very fully into the vexed question of "repeats," coming to the sensible conclusion that they should always be observed unless to do so would make the movement unbearably long. Mr. Blom is against the otiose "programme" theory of Schering, and leaves the sonatas to make their own emotional impression, which of all music they are perhaps the most capable of doing. He notes the interesting point that Beethoven undoubtedly developed his revolutionary style on the piano, before applying it to the orchestra, a fact which probably accounts for the *sforzando*-followed-by-sudden-*p* effects which occur so frequently in all the composer's music and had never been used so extensively before his day. Yet Beethoven's style in these sonatas is never as distinctively pianistic as it might be, and Mr. Blom states an important truth when he says: "The elegance and lucidity of Clementi, the variety and abundance of tone-colour attained by Dussek, were not within his reach; but then, he never cared enough for manner as distinct from matter to cultivate pianistic writing for its own sake." His ancestors were Bach, Handel and above all Haydn; the line of development which runs from Mozart, through Hummel and Dussek, to Field and Chopin, is a parallel one, though at the very end of his career (*e.g.* in the first movement of the Sonata Op. III) Beethoven seems to be experimenting with pianoforte sonorities in a way that strongly suggests the impressionism of Chopin.

Horses in Action. By COLIN DAVY. *Michael Joseph.* 10*s.* 6*d.*
Horses and Ponies. By LIONEL EDWARDS. *Country Life.* £1 1*s.*

An aura of sentiment and snobbishness has grown up around the horse, and one is apt to forget that it has a rhythm of line and freedom of action which brought it into Greek and early Graeco-Roman sculpture, which was subsequently abused until it lapsed into monumental statuary, and during the last century, a farmyard still life; in recent years it has recovered from this stigma, and the first book, by its title, makes a third to *Theatre in Action* and *Ballet in Action*. I don't doubt that this sequel was unintentional, the publishers are different but that is what has been achieved. Photography has brought something alive and dramatic, the horse in this book is not a set piece for milord, it is a very vital and beautiful animal standing for judgment on its own merits. Though this book deals only with the horseman's horse, the ponderous fringed feet of Percherons and brewer's dray-horses are not set down on any of the pages; it is a lowest common multiple of horses, and the people who ride and care for them. The text is secondary to the photographs, and is used as an introduction to each section, as it treats Racing or Steeplechasing or Shows; the rest is left to the pictures, picked from the sporting papers, practically none of them posed, so they are free from any extraneous element of the hunting print variety. If you like, or would like to like, horses, this is the book; here they are, without the intrusion of the capitalist masses at Melton Mowbray waiting to ride you down with harsh laughs, and unadulterated by sugary sentiment or cavalry mess. The best thing we can say about it is that it's as good as its forerunners. Lionel Edwards has always gloried in horses as opposed to horseflesh, and this is another to the long catalogue of his books of drawings. The horse is the central character. The horse matters more than its rider and he draws them in gala dress at a ploughing match, and with obvious excitement he draws the Viennese *haute école* at Olympia; again, with the sympathy all on the side of the horse he draws U.S.A. army buyers trying a so-called saddle horse. His half-tone pictures are rather apt to appear as magazine illustrations, but the pen and charcoal sketches leave no doubt as to the competence of their artist.

Population: To-Day's Question. By G. F. MCCLEARY. *Allen and Unwin.* 6*s.*

It is well known that the population of this and other countries is shortly going to decline, but it is not so well known that it will be exceedingly difficult to check this fall when it has once begun. In proportion to the rest of the population, the number of women who can bear children is diminishing, so that the decline becomes culminative, and at present there seems to be no signs of larger families becoming fashionable again. Mr. McCleary explains, as simply as possible, the methods whereby statisticians arrive at these conclusions, what has been proved by them, and what has not been proved. This book is short and simple, and concentrates its attention on Europe and the British Dominions. There is a section on the campaign for babies in Nazi Germany, and the conclusion is that it is too early to decide whether the marriage loans, tax exemptions, and other devices to encourage large families will have more than a temporary effect. One thing is certain: that the birth-rate has not yet gone up sufficiently to prevent an eventual decline of the people awakened to their magnificent destiny in the world. The present ignorance with regard to genetics and heredity and the causes of family limitation are reviewed. Living in cities, the false connection in many people's minds of what is called over-population and unemployment, the gospel of getting on, and the decline of religion are the reasons given for failing to be fruitful and multiply. Though he often spends too much time on side issues, Mr. McCleary is surprisingly readable, but hardly comprehensive, for he gives too much space to Britain and the Dominions, whom the author hopes will be roused to take more interest in the problem of declining numbers. In conclusion he quotes the words of John Stuart Mill: "When the object is to raise the permanent condition of a people, small means do not merely produce small effects, they produce no effect at all." This is remarkably apposite, for to "solve" the population problem would involve "solving" the economic and the social and the religious problems of to-day. However, the study of population remains of great importance to any understanding of economics, and this is a simple guide to the subject from a puzzled liberal point of view.

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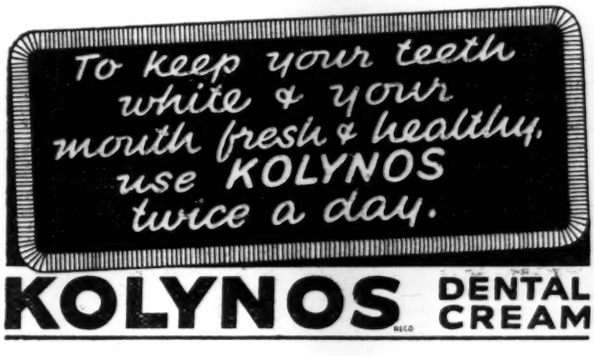

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No. 465

Set by Raymond Mortimer

We offer a first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea for the best English paraphrase of the following sonnet by Musset:

Que j'aime le premier frisson d'hiver ! le chaume,
Sous le pied du chasseur, refusant de ployer !
Quand vient la pie aux champs que le foin vert embaume,
Au fond du vieux château s'éveille le foyer ;
C'est le temps de la ville.—Oh ! lorsque l'an dernier,
J'y revins, que je vis ce bon Louvre et son dôme,
Paris et sa fumée, et tout ce beau royaume
(J'entends encore au vent les postillons crier),
Que j'aimais ce temps gris, ces passants et la Seine
Sous ses mille falots assise en souveraine !
J'allais revoir l'hiver.—Et toi, ma vie, et toi !
Oh ! dans tes longs regards j'allais tremper mon âme ;
Je saluais tes murs.—Car, qui m'eût dit, madame,
Que votre cœur sitôt avait changé pour moi ?

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, February 3rd.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 463

Set by V. S. Pritchett

The usual prizes are offered for revised nursery rhymes suited to a modern child, to be based on any of the classical models, such as Oranges and Lemons, Simple Simon, etc. Politics are not barred, but it is hoped that competitors will consider other elements in the contemporary scene.

Report by V. S. Pritchett

This was one of those popular competitions where Virtue cannot be properly rewarded because almost every competitor had it. The standard was high and the entries were copious. The first thing to do is to quote some of the shorter ones. But before I do that credit must be given for those good entries which were too long to quote, sent in by F. C. Bond, Beda, T. M. Parry, Yorick, Perkins, R. D. C. And now for the shorts; they cannot easily be classified:—

Jack Spratt drove best on flat:
His wife on hills was keen;
So turn about they let her out
And kept their licence clean. FRIAR TUCK

I love little pussy, her coat is so warm,
And if I don't hurt her she'll do me no harm.
Were I in Spain, little pussy might be
A neat little rissole served up for my tea. IVY ELSTOB

Biby, biby 'Ackney,
Farver's got the sack, see?
So go an' kick a tin arahnd
The burrer refus' dumpin' grahnd. ICHABOD

Please to remember
The peace of September,
The time of unmentionable facts.
There's plenty of reason
Why European treason,
Is disguised by unworkable pacts.
G. D. E. BOYD-CARPENTER

Georgie Porgie pudding and pie
Kissed the girls and made them cry
For more and more and more and more,
But Georgie was doing the same next door.
DESMOND COOPER

Travel by air to the Folies Bergère
To see the blonde lady, practically bare,
With rings on her fingers and bells on her toes.
Why nobody shoots her nobody knows. E. DAVIS

"Montagu, Montagu,
Have you any 'dough'?"
"Yes, sir, yes, sir,
Two bags below.
One for the Führer,
And one for the Duce,
And none for the refugees
Who live on the loose." E. M. SAW

Duff, Duff, the Cooper's son,
Got "fed-up" and away he run,
He left the Fleet,
But kept his seat,
And then went writing down the Street.
MISS A. N. REAY

Hark! hark! the strains of *Bach!*
The B.B.C.'s come to town!
But some like "rags," and some like "gags,"
And some like Teddy Brown! "LITTLE BILLEE"

Sing a song of sixpence
To the talkies hie
See the fifty gangsters
And a murdered spy.
Watch the killer captured
Put into Sing Sing
Wasn't that a lovely film
Before God Saved the King?
The maid was sitting downstairs
Children both in bed
Shrieking in their nightmares
"Drat the brats," she said. L. M. J.

O, hush thee my baby, I'll register thee
Under Sub-section 2 of Sub-paragraph B,
With third-party risks under Schedule XY
Then maybe they'll give thee a permit to cry.
J. M. STODDART

Mary had a little lamb,
And quite a lot of mink.
No longer washes dirty shirts,
Or dishes at the sink.

To wear a sumptuous coat of mink
Is not against the rule.
Alas! the neighbours cannot laugh,
She's won that football pool. "WILLOW-PATTERN"

One of the best of the copious entries was Mr. Peter Chamberlain's, who has a remarkable facility in the tough genre. There were two crowded pages and for mass-production he led in output and diversity:

Tom, Tom, the Mayfair Kid,
Stole a Rolls and away he slid,
Get on the line, dial 999
And Tom will do a stretch of time.

easily put him among the five who, I recommend, shall divide the prizes between them.

The others are Charles Furbank, Guy Innes, Harry Broadbent and A. Sandison. Mr. Broadbent was another of the prolific, and I have picked out his two best efforts. "Runcy-duncy" was a touch of genius.

(1)

Simone Simon
Met a He-Man
Going to the Flicks.
Said the He-Man
To Miss Simon,
"Hullo, kid, how's tricks?"

Simone Simon
Asked the He-Man,
"Show me first your rents."
Said the He-Man
To Miss Simon,
"Babe, I ain't ten cents."

Simone Simon
Called a G-Man,
"This guy's fresh," she said.
Then the G-Man
Pumped the He-Man
Kinda full of lead. PETER CHAMBERLAIN

(2)

LONDON BELLS REVISED

Cartels and Monopoly,
Say the bells of Trichinopoli.

The early Mallarmé,
Say the bells of the Church Army.

Europas and Bremens,
Say the bells of St. Clement's.

London Amusements

MATINEES

All at 2.30 unless otherwise stated.

AMBASSADORS. Spring Meeting. Wed., Fri.
APOLLO. Gas Light. Sat., Feb. 4.
COLISEUM. Varieties. Sats.
COMEDY. Room for Two. Tues., Sat., 2.30
DRURY LANE. Babes in the Wood. W.T.S. 2.0
DUCHESS. The Corn is Green. W., S., 2.30
GLOBE. Robert's Wife. Wed. & Sat.
HIPPODROME. Fleet's Lit Up. Th. & Sat.
LYRIC. The Flashing Stream. Wed. & Thurs.
MERCURY. The Playboy. Fri., Sat.
PALACE. Under Your Hat. Wed., Sat.
QUEEN'S. Dear Octopus. Wed. & Sat.
S. MARTIN'S. When We are Married. Tu., Fr.
SAVILLE. Geneva. Wed., Sat.
SAVOY. Elephants in Arcady. W., S., 2.30
VAUDEVILLE. Goodness, How Sad! Tu., F.
WESTMINSTER. Miss Julie W. S.
WYNDHAM'S. Quiet Wedding. Wed. & Sat.

OPERA & BALLET

PEOPLE'S PALACE, Mile End Road. ADV. 2777
ROYAL CARL ROSA OPERA CO.
Second week's programme, commencing Jan. 30th
Mon., **LA BOHEME;** Tues., **FAUST** (WITH BALLET); Wed., **MADAM BUTTERFLY;** Thurs., **THE MASKED BALL** (OLGA HALEY); Fri., **DIE FLEDERMAUS** (BLUE DANUBE BALLET); Sat. (Mat.), **THE BARBER OF SEVILLE;** Sat. (Evg.), **CARMEN** (OLGA HALEY).
Evenings at 8. Matinee at 2.30. Reserved 2/- to 5/-

SADLER'S WELLS, Rosebery Ave., E.C.1.
2d. 'bus from Piccadilly. (Terminus 1672.) 6d. to 7s. 6d.

Tues.,	Jan. 31st, 8.0.	MADAM BUTTERFLY.
Wed.,	Feb. 1st, 8.0.	FAUST with Full Ballet.
Thurs.,	Feb. 2nd, 8.30.	GALA PERFORMANCE OF BALLET — THE SLEEPING PRINCESS (Tschaikowsky). First performance by the Company—in aid of the Housing Centre.
Fri.,	Feb. 3rd, 8.0.	LA BOHEME.
Sat.,	Feb. 4th, 2.30.	BALLET — CASSE-NOISETTE (entirety), NOCTURNE.
Sat.,	Feb. 4th, 7.45.	THE SNOW MAIDEN.

THEATRES

AMBASSADORS. Tem. 1171. EVGS., 8.30.
Mats. Wednesdays & Fridays, 2.30.
SPRING MEETING
A Light Comedy by M. J. Farrell and John Perry.

APOLLO. (GER. 2663). TUES. Next at 8.15.
(Subs. 8.30. 1st Mat., Sat., Feb. 4th, 2.30)
GAS LIGHT
GWEN FFRANGCON-DAVIES

COMEDY. Whi. 2578. Evgs., 8.30. Tu., Sat., 2.30.
ELSIE RANDOLPH, HENRY KENDALL and HUGH WAKEFIELD in
ROOM FOR TWO

DRURY LANE. (Temple Bar 7171)
Evenings 7.45. Wed., Thurs., Sat., 2.0
"BABES IN THE WOOD"
G. S. MELVIN, FAY COMPTON,
JACK EDGE, GRETA FAYNE.

DUCHESS. (Tem. 8243.) Evgs., 8.30, Wed., Sat., 2.30.
ATHENE SEYLER and EMLYN WILLIAMS in
THE CORN IS GREEN
Comedy by EMLYN WILLIAMS.

University Correspondence College
William Briggs Trust Ltd.

★

LL.B. (Lond.) and BAR EXAMINATIONS

UNIVERSITY Correspondence College provides courses of instruction for the **Intermediate** and **Final** Examinations for the LL.B. Degree; also for Parts I and II of the **Bar** Examination. The College is now an Educational Trust and therefore is not conducted primarily as a profit-making concern. This ensures a very high standard of tuition at most moderate fees.

More than 300 U.C.C. students have graduated in Laws, including 16 Doctors in Law. *The successes of U.C.C. at London University are audited by Chartered Accountants.*

★

Prospectus

A Special Prospectus for Law Examinations, may be had post free from the Registrar,

70 BURLINGTON HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE

THEATRES—continued

DUKE OF YORKS. Tem. 5122
Commencing February 3rd at 8.15
Subsequently 8.30. Mats., Tues., Thurs., 2.30
LUCIE MANNHEIM in
NORAH (or A Doll's House)

GLOBE. Ger. 1592. EVGS., 8.30 sharp
Mats., WEDS. and SATS., 2.30 sharp.
ROBERT'S WIFE
By ST. JOHN ERVINE.

HIPPODROME. Ger. 3272. 8.15. Th., Sat., 2.30.
FRANCES DAY, STANLEY LUPINO,
ADELE DIXON. RALPH READER.
in **THE FLEET'S LIT UP**
(LAST 2 WEEKS).

HIS MAJESTY'S Whi 6606
BINNIE HALE in
MAGYAR MELODY
A Musical Romance
First performance Friday, January 20. Subs. 8.15.

LYRIC. Ger. 3686. Evgs., 8.30. Wed., Thurs., 2.30.
GODFREY TEARLE, MARGARET RAWLINGS in
THE FLASHING STREAM
by CHARLES MORGAN.

MERCURY, Ladbroke Rd. Evgs., 8.45, F., S., 2.30
THE PLAYBOY
of the **Western World,** J. M. SYNGE'S Masterpiece
For a limited run. 6/-, 3/6, 2/6. Park 5700.

OLD VIC. (WATERLOO 6336) 6d. to 7s. 6d.
Evenings (except Mondays) at 8
Mats.: Thurs. and Sats., 2.30
SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER
(Goldsmith)
URSULA JEANS PAMELA BROWN
MARGARET YARDE JOHN MILLS
ANTHONY NICHOLLS GEORGE BENSON
EDWARD CHAPMAN
Play produced by TYRONE GUTHRIE
Costumes and Scenery by DAVID HOMAN

FILMS and other notices appear on page 155

THEATRES—continued

PALACE. Ger. 6834. Evgs., 8.15. Wed., Sat., 2.30
LEE EPHRAIM PRESENTS
JACK HULBERT and CICELY COURTNEIDGE in
"UNDER YOUR HAT"

PLAYHOUSE. (Whi. 7774) Mats. only, DAILY, 2.30
ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS
including the Mad Hatter's Tea Party.
By LEWIS CARROLL.

QUEEN'S. Ger. 4517. Evgs. at 8.15 sharp
Mats., Weds. and Sats., at 2.30.
MARIE TEMPEST. JOHN GIELGUD in
DEAR OCTOPUS. By DODIE SMITH.

ST. MARTIN'S. Tem. 1443. 8.30. Tu., Fri., 2.30
LONDON'S LAUGHING SUCCESS
WHEN WE ARE MARRIED
by J. B. PRIESTLEY.

SAVILLE. (Tem. 4011.) Evgs., 8.15. Wed. & Sat., 2.30
BERNARD SHAW'S play of the moment.
GENEVA
Prices, 1/6 to 10/6.
Transferring to the St. James Theatre, Mon. next, Jan., 30

SAVOY. Tem. 8888. Evgs., 8.30. Wed., Sat. 2.30
HERBERT FARJEON'S Musical Production
ELEPHANTS IN ARCADY
IRENE EISINGER. FREDERICK RANALOW.

UNITY. (EUS. 5391.) Evgs., ex. Mons., 8.30.
". . . a cure for despondency."—*New Statesman.*
BABES IN THE WOOD
A PANTOMIME WITH POLITICAL POINT.
Seats: 1/- to 3/6. Members only (Subscr. 1/-, Share 1/-).
Unity Theatre, Goldington Street, N.W.1.

VAUDEVILLE. Tem. 4871. 8.30. Tues., Fri., 2.30
THE MOST DELIGHTFUL PLAY IN LONDON
GOODNESS, HOW SAD! by Robert Morley.
"One Long Laugh."—*Sunday Pictorial.*

VICTORIA PALACE. (Vic. 1317.) Nightly 6.20 & 9.
LUPINO LANE.
TEDDIE ST. DENIS & GEORGE GRAVES.
ME AND MY GIRL
THE HOME OF THE LAMBETH WALK. SECOND YEAR

WESTMINSTER. (Vic. 0283.) 8/6, 6/6, 4/6, 2/6
Evenings 8.30. Matinees, Wed., & Sat., 2.30.
THE LONDON MASK THEATRE COMPANY in
STRINDBERG'S
MISS JULIE
Preceded by Schnitzler's "A Farewell Supper"
Followed by Barrie's "The Will"

WYNDHAM'S. Tem. Bar 3028 & 9
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Wed. and Sat., 2.30.
QUIET WEDDING
ELIZABETH ALLAN FRANK LAWTON MARIE LOHR

REPERTORY THEATRE

LIVERPOOL. Evgs., 7.45. **The Playhouse**
The Haxtons
HUGH WALPOLE

VARIETY

COLISEUM, Charing X. Tem. 3161
January 30th. 6.25 and 9. Mats., Sats., 2.30.
Hermione Baddeley and Cyril Ritchard and Co. in "Tit-Bits from Nine Sharp"; Marion, The Intuitionist; Four Bachelors; Emile Boreo; Cliff Cook; Thrilling Table Tennis; Clifford and Marion; etc.

CONCERT

QUEEN'S HALL
BACH CHOIR
THURSDAY NEXT, February 2nd, at 8.15
MASS in B Minor BACH
NOEL EADIE ERIC GREENE
ANNE WOOD KEITH FALKNER
THE JACQUES AND BOYD NEEL ORCHESTRAS
Conductor:
SIR ADRIAN BOULT
Tickets: 9s., 6s., 3s. 6d., at Queen's Hall and IBBS and TILLETT, 124 Wigmore Street, W.1.

RESTAURANTS

IF you missed the announcement of our competition send for particulars, for you have yet time to enter. RULES, Maiden Lane, W.C.2. Lunches, Dinners and late Suppers, licensed till midnight. Established 1780.

GIVE your Sherry Party at The Book WINE RESTAURANT, facing British Museum, where you can also read "THE NEW STATESMAN" and take out a subscription. MUS. 6428.

Have the bedrooms got a pot in 'em?
Says the great bell at Tottenham.

When shall we be free?
Say the bells at Stepney.

When we all wish for peace,
Say the silver bells of Nice.

Human nature doesn't alter,
Says the slow bell at Malta.

When we vanquish the rich,
Say the bells at Shoreditch.

Never, alas,
Say the bells of Madras.

Here comes a candle to light you to bed,
And here comes a chopper to chop off your head.

CHARLES FURBANK

(3)

Appease pudding hot,
Appease pudding cold,
Appease pudding in the pot
Nine days old.

Who'll buy it hot?
Who'll buy it cold?
Chamberlain has got a lot
Not yet sold.

GUY INNES

(4)

Neville he would to Munich go,
Heigh Runcy Duncy!
Whether the Labour men liked it or no,
With a Runcy Duncy, soothe 'em and sell 'em,
Heigh ho! said Runciman Duncy.

Pray Neville dear, will you give us the Sude?
Heigh Runcy Duncy!
But let it include the munitions of Skoda,
With a Runcy Duncy, soothe 'em and sell 'em,
Heigh ho! said Runciman Duncy. HARRY BROADBENT

(5)

Hush-a-bye, baby, don't suck your thumb,
That is the way that the complexes come.
If the complexes come, poor baby will fall,
Into neurosis, libido, and all. A. SANDISON

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 317.—CARNATIONS

I became well acquainted with Mr. Lightstepper's cuties that time they played at the Grand Theatre. They told me some amusing yarns about Lightstepper.

One story was about the carnations that he bought for the girls every morning. They were priced at 3*d.*, 6*d.*, 9*d.* and 1*s.* in the flower-stall at the Station Hotel, and each day Lightstepper bought five bobs' worth and gave each girl a carnation. But no—that isn't strictly true. Dawn Doolittle, the fan dancer ("Hopeless Dawn" they called her) had done something or other to annoy Lightstepper and never got a flower at all. The other kids received cheap or dear carnations according to whether they were—or weren't—in the impresario's good books.

And that meant (I was interested to learn) that he never laid out his money twice in exactly the same way—though this was only just possible.

The funny thing was that, if Dawn had had her carnation, along with the other girls, the same range of possibilities would have been available to Lightstepper.

How many girls in the troupe?

PROBLEM 315.—ANIMAL CRACKERS

This simple problem attracted a very large entry—as, indeed, I had anticipated. I need not set out the formal demonstration that

Mr. Guineapig gave a hedgehog to Mr. Squirrel.

PROBLEM 314.—SEPARATION ORDER

This has turned out rather a grisly business. Eleven solutions have been submitted, of which only two are in agreement. I propose, therefore, to secure expert co-operation before making any pronouncement.

CALIBAN

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

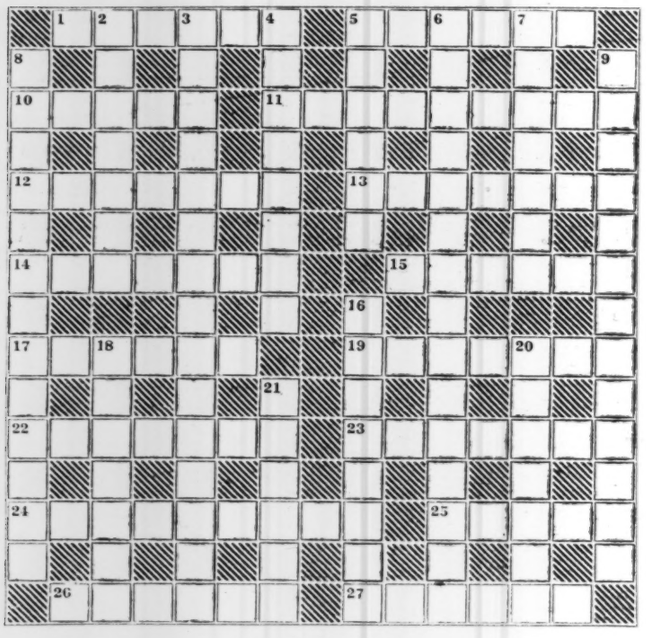
In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s.* Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 464

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

R. M. Bate, Stoodleigh Court, Tiverton, Devon

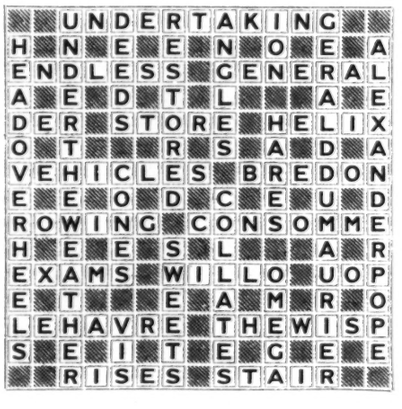
ACROSS

1. Gives one the go-by. (6)
5. One's pet act. (6)
10. Split up the crate. (5)
11. Expunged, by 12 perhaps. (9)
12. His opponents no doubt afterwards turn out to be coloured men. (7)
13. The ceremony gets mixed in time. (7)
14. The organ of feeling. (7)
15. Combination of one g and two g's. (6)
17. As much as a lesson perhaps. (6)
19. I got set for it. (7)
22. Sticks in the forest no doubt. (7)
23. Has his hair waved for a start. (7)
24. Often landsmen, oddly enough. (9)
25. Nominally stark perhaps. (5)
26. The sort of stamp that they didn't. (6)
27. A bit thirsty, but inclined to be T.T.? (6)

DOWN

2. Bill's affair. (7)
3. Standardised in America. (15)
4. The sort of bird the hen is. (8)
5. The tight one is not reserved for stray revellers. (6)
6. Pegasus of the nursery? (15)
7. Bag for bawbees. (7)
8. Entertainments of the in-between days. (13)
9. What the jockey sees on rounding Tattenham Corner. (13)
16. Informed again, as it were. (8)
18. A man mixed up with polo. (7)
20. Cold remark of the Frenchman on arriving at the haunt of the lake monster? (7)
21. I get on top of the hut. (6)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



Company Meeting

MARTINS BANK

EXPORT TRADE PERPLEXITIES

MR. F. A. BATES' ADDRESS

THE One Hundred and Eighth annual meeting of members of Martins Bank Limited was held at Liverpool on Tuesday.

Mr. Frederic Alan Bates, the Chairman, presiding, said: Our net profit of £872,929 is an increase of £19,363, due to further expansion in our business. With £309,007 brought forward, we have available for distribution £1,181,936. An interim dividend of 7 per cent. was paid in July. For the December half-year we propose to increase the dividend to 7½ per cent., making 14½ per cent. for the year. We have added £50,000 to Reserve Fund, bringing it up to £3,550,000, £100,000 to Premises Redemption Account and £100,000 to Pension Fund. £328,730 is carried forward. The bank's liquid position is maintained. Cash in hand and at the Bank of England amounts to £11,142,000, 11.07 per cent. of our liabilities to the public. Total cash items represent 21.42 per cent. of those liabilities. Investments at £33,395,000 are an increase of £2,172,000. Deposits have again expanded, and with an increase of £4,530,000 have established the new high record of £100,038,000. Advances have also increased; at £44,421,000 they are £2,001,000 more. There have been increases to agriculture, shipping and transport, retail trades, iron and steel manufacturers, furniture manufacturers and distributors, to private customers, and in connection with housing.

The influence of restriction schemes preventing excessive accumulation of stocks had a steadying effect. We have, therefore, grounds for the belief that not only have we seen the worst, but that some progress has been made in the search for a technique which may limit the severity of trade recessions in future. We cannot escape the conclusion that re-armament has had some effect on the export trade of our industries by placing Government contracts at their doors. Added to this is the fact that foreign debtors are out of favour. Our foreign loans in the past laid the foundation of our world trade, but where can we lend money abroad nowadays for the purpose of creating the power to purchase our manufactured goods with any assurance that it would be safe?

Concentration upon re-armament and activity in those of our industries producing goods for home consumption have not absorbed our unemployed. It is essential, therefore, that we should look ahead to the time when work upon re-armament will diminish, and that we should use every appropriate means to expand our export trade. We must adjust our actions, consistently with sound procedure, to meet the tactics of countries that, under the influence of strained economic conditions, adopt measures inimical to British interests. The Anglo-American trade agreement is evidence that Governments on both sides of the Atlantic are co-operating to their mutual advantage.

The cotton industry is looking for stimulation in its export trade as a result of that agreement, but it is realised that it will benefit only a section of the industry. The Cotton Enabling Bill will make some contribution to revival of the trade, but material recovery can only be expected from settled world conditions and development of new lines.

During the year industry as a whole has done moderately well, although there have been disappointments. The steel industry passed through a difficult year, and exports, due partly to the establishment of further steel works abroad, have suffered. The industry was also affected by the decline in shipbuilding, Lloyd's Register recording that orders placed for new tonnage were only half of those of the preceding year. Shipbuilding and shipowning are so closely related that it may be deduced from the fact that merchant shipbuilding had a difficult year so also had shipowning. This was disappointing, and British shipping finds itself in a position where urgent measures may be necessary. So long as there is political disturbance throughout the world, and our trade continues to be affected by the methods of certain foreign countries, we cannot look for sustained improvement. It is encouraging, therefore, that the Overseas Trade Department is energetically tackling the problem of the country's trade in collaboration with the various industries involved.

The soundness of British banks is taken so much for granted that it is perhaps pardonable to recall the way in which they faced the crisis at the end of September. The service they then rendered to the nation is apt to be overlooked. They had to meet considerable withdrawals of foreign and other deposits for investment in the United States. Simultaneously they were faced at the height of the crisis with a severe fall in the value of stock exchange securities held on account of customers, yet it may be said that in no case did this result in the withdrawal of overdraft facilities during the crisis. The value of such calmness, possible only because of the maintenance of well tried traditions, is surely very great, and that it took place almost without comment is perhaps the finest tribute to the confidence reposed in our banking institutions. The report and accounts were adopted.

Company Meeting

NATIONAL PROVINCIAL BANK LIMITED

MR. COLIN FREDERICK CAMPBELL'S ADDRESS

THE Annual General Meeting of the shareholders of the National Provincial Bank Limited was held on Tuesday last at the Head Office, London, E.C.

Mr. Colin F. Campbell (the Chairman) said (in part): I am pleased to be able to say that our business as represented by the number of accounts opened continues to expand. Current, Deposit and Other Accounts amount to £310,094,154, which is £10,152,260 lower than the figure quoted in the previous Report. This reflects the general tendency of Bank deposits to fall. Advances at £139,586,103 show a small decline compared with a year ago, but here as in the case of Deposits the weekly average for the year was in excess of that for 1937.

The Profit and Loss Statement discloses a net profit of £1,771,785 as compared with £1,874,959 last year, which, having regard to the difficult times through which we have passed and the demands on us in the way of ever-growing expenses and taxation, is, we think, a satisfactory result. The dividend continues at 15 per cent. as before, and after allocating £100,000 to Bank Premises and £250,000 to Pension Fund there remains to be carried forward £573,588, which is practically the same figure as last year.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

In taking stock of our position at the end of 1938, the feeling dominant in all minds must be that although ground has been lost in some directions during the year, the position might well have been disastrously worse. We faced the imminent possibility of war, with all its unspeakable horrors, in September, and the arrangement we were called upon to make during the crisis threw a heavy burden upon the management and the staff of the Bank, besides involving us in considerable expenditure.

Looking back now on all that took place during that eventful fortnight it is some consolation to know—and the knowledge should give us confidence for the future—that our great financial institutions can sustain the shock of such a grave crisis, although it should be recognised that so far as the Stock Exchange is concerned, minimum prices were introduced in the gilt-edged market. These happenings clearly indicate that in these uncertain days nothing is more important than that the great Banks of this country should continue to maintain a position of liquidity and strength even though this involves sacrifice of earning power.

Domestic trade, according to reports obtained from our branches in all parts of the country, has been fairly well maintained throughout the year. The Chairman then dealt with the position of the textile, iron and steel and other industries, and went on to say:

A vigorous and flourishing export trade is, in the case of this country, a condition of the very existence of domestic trade. The difficulties which face exporters are not peculiar to this country. The real task which confronts the great trading nations is not that of seeking to increase individual shares of a restricted market, but to do away with the impediments and restrictions which still limit the total volume of international trade.

We cannot ignore the existence of practices which distort normal economic channels of trade and may eventually inflict lasting damage upon our export industries. We must, in view of the paramount importance of our export trade, be prepared by concerted action of industries concerned, together with Government support, to meet such competition.

The Anglo-American Trade Agreement is a matter of the utmost importance, and we are justified in believing that it will have a far-reaching effect of the most favourable kind.

THE OUTLOOK

When we come to consider the future course of world trade, we are compelled to adopt a short-term view in face of international uncertainties with which we are surrounded. Given normal conditions, the guiding factors are price tendencies, stocks of goods for consumption, and general demand. The course of both wholesale and retail prices during the past twelve months would seem to indicate that both have reacted to an extent that justifies us in thinking that prices are now on a much firmer basis. On the score of prices and stocks there is justification for the view that the situation at present is more healthy than it was a year or so ago, when prices were still falling and stocks were accumulating.

A further consideration is the enormous expenditure to which the country is committed in connection with rearmament. We need both assurance and confidence that waste and extravagance are being carefully watched.

When we look nearer home and think of the series of shocks and crises to which the world in general was exposed in 1938, is it too much to hope that the desire for peace—so strong in this country—which has been increasingly made manifest by the plain men and women living in the great and powerful countries in Europe will prevail over all other considerations, and that both they and ourselves will be enabled to live our lives this year without the spectre of war being ever before us.

The Report and Accounts were unanimously adopted.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

POLITICAL LIQUIDATION—BANK CHAIRMEN'S SPEECHES—WEST AFRICANS

STOCK markets suffered this week the worst political scare since September, 1938. In some ways it was actually worse, for whereas the market was prepared for the war scare of last September, it was totally unprepared for that of this week. A report appears to have reached Amsterdam last week-end that the German mobilisation had been fixed for mid-February. With the knowledge that the Netherlands Bank has been sending part of its gold to London and New York for safe custody, the Dutch speculator had a bad attack of nerves. Stock was unloaded first in New York last Saturday, and this liquidation caused a fall of 2½ points in the Dow Jones industrial index. On Monday the liquidation from the Continent overtook the London Stock Exchange, South African gold shares, oils and other international leaders being particularly weak. New York took its cue from London and suffered another slump, with the volume of business increasing. On Tuesday and Wednesday the selling steadily increased in London and the attempts of Wall Street to rally were half-hearted. The Dow Jones industrial index at the moment of writing has fallen 8 points since January 20th and leading stocks like Bethlehem Steel have fallen 8 to 9 points. The only market which showed any resistance to the downward trend in New York was that in utilities, for a better understanding between the Government and the managements has now been reached. Market opinion about the outlook in New York is divided. Some operators believe that the market has now reached a resistance point and will rally; others consider that with continued liquidation in London and in Continental centres stocks are bound for lower levels. Very few of the financial pundits anticipated the sharp break in prices this week and the sudden break has shattered confidence for the time being. The cynics are wondering whether Germany will default on her "standstill" and long-term debts before the war breaks out or whether she will wait to default on the hour of mobilisation. It is a pity that the financial rabbits who take flight at these war scares do not realise that they are playing Herr Hitler's game.

* * *

A vigorous export policy has been the key-note of the majority of the annual speeches so far delivered by bank chairmen to their shareholders. Mr. Colin Campbell of the National Provincial, Mr. Fisher of Barclays, Mr. Beckett of the Westminster and Mr. Bates of Martins Bank all four took a guardedly reassuring view of the home trade's situation and prospects, but lent support to the contention that Government backing and closer trade organisation must be mobilised to meet subsidised foreign competition in the export markets. Addressing the Midland Bank meeting on Thursday, Mr. McKenna gave a lucid exposition of the methods which have been adopted to "cushion" the effects, first, of an influx and, latterly, of withdrawals of foreign balances. This he coupled with a plea, which I unreservedly endorse, for "expansionist" monetary policy. In view of the fact that labour is far from being fully employed, and that there is no sign whatever of a general increase in costs, he rightly urged that deflation would be a disastrous policy and that in the forthcoming budget the Chancellor should lean towards increased borrowing rather than heavier taxation. I wish I could share Mr. McKenna's apparent confidence that, under our "managed" currency system, deflation will in fact be rigorously eschewed. He demonstrated how sales of gold by the Exchange Account lead to an increase in public deposits at the Bank of England, and a diminution in the supply of Treasury bills which form, after cash, the joint-stock bank's second line of liquid assets and thus determine their lending limits. Ultimately, as he said, the situation is redressed by Government payments to contractors; but at this season, when tax income is flowing strongly into the Treasury, there is bound to be a market shortage of bills unless the Bank of England converts part of its bill portfolio into longer-term securities. Even a temporary contraction of banking resources should at all costs be avoided at this juncture.

* * *

I have already referred to the anxieties felt by certain holders of South African gold shares about the forthcoming Cape budget and the Fascist tendencies in that Dominion. Certainly, Kaffir shares have been among the worst sufferers of the war scare in the market. Investors who do not wish to leave gold altogether might consider an exchange into the West African gold mines, which are now reaping the benefit of the large amount of exploratory work carried out in the last six years. As far as I know, there is no special political risk attaching to West Africa. Most of the companies, it is true, are working quartz reefs, which are less regular than the Rand formation, but Amalgamated Banket Areas, in which Gold Coast Selection Trust has a large interest, is unique in having a banket formation similar to that worked on the South African Rand. If I were making an investment in West Africa, I would spread it between the following:

	Price	Last Dividend	Est. Dividend	Approx. Yield % on est. div.
Ashanti Goldfields Corp. Ltd. 4s. shares ..	4 x.d. cum bonus cum rights	95%	95%	£5 15 9
Gold Coast Selection Trust Ltd. 5s. shares	20/9	10% t.f.	25% t.f.	£8 6 0

Ashanti is a long-life goldfield rather than a single mine and further ore bodies have recently been discovered at the lowest levels of the existing workings and in the outlying areas. A total dividend of 95 per cent. has been paid for the year to September, 1938, together with a share bonus of 20 per cent. Further, shareholders have the right to subscribe to one new share at £3 for 20 shares held. Since the beginning of the current year the company has raised the grade of ore milled and, allowing for the rise in the price of gold, earnings should now be running at 100 per cent. per annum on the increased capital. It is therefore reasonable to allow for the maintenance of the dividend at 95 per cent. Gold Coast Selection Trust is mainly interested in Ariston, Amalgamated Banket Areas and Marlu. Its income is at present derived from Marlu and Ariston, but Amalgamated Banket Areas is installing a new plant which will be in operation by the middle of this year, when dividends of 5 per cent. should be resumed. The Marlu and Ariston dividends received this year should enable the Gold Coast Selection Trust to pay a final dividend of 10 per cent. free of tax, making a total of 25 per cent. free of tax for 1938-9. The break-up value of the shares is, I calculate, in excess of 30s.

OIL
IN MEXICO
by
JOHN SEROCOLD
2s. 6d. net
This is a tract for the times, and concerns all who are interested in the future of British investment abroad. The situation with which Mr. Serocold deals has a direct bearing on national security and is of vital importance to our commerce.
Chapman & Hall

Company Meeting

WESTMINSTER BANK LIMITED

THE HON. RUPERT E. BECKETT'S ADDRESS

THE Annual Ordinary General Meeting of Westminster Bank Limited was held on Wednesday last at the Head Office, Lothbury, E.C.2. The Hon. Rupert E. Beckett (Chairman) presided.

The Chairman opened his address by referring to Lord Runciman's resignation from the Board due to his having taken office under the Government, and to the retiral of the past Secretary, Mr. Frederick Mytton, after forty-seven years' service. Continuing, he said (in part):

Our Current, Deposit and Other Accounts as compared with the figures for 1937 show a drop of over £22 million. This, however, must not be taken as representing a diminution of that amount during the whole year. As a matter of fact our average for the past twelve months shows a materially higher figure. Advances to Customers and Other Accounts show on the year a decrease slightly in excess of £2,300,000. One regrets, naturally, to see any contraction in this, the most profitable item in our accounts, but the fact that so many industries are engaged on Government work, and that there has been a slowing-up of general trade, is sufficient to account for the change in the situation.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

The profit for the year amounts to £1,557,161. This enables us to declare the same dividends, amounting for the year to 18 per cent. on the partly-paid shares and to 12½ per cent. on the fully-paid shares. Considering the events of 1938 as a whole, the crisis that supervened in the autumn, the diminution of world trade, and the lessened resources at our disposal, I hold the opinion that the profit declared is satisfactory, and in conformity with what might be reasonably expected. It enables us to maintain the allocation of £300,000 to the Officers Pension Fund, a most necessary item, to place £100,000 in reduction of Premises Account, reducing last year's balance sheet figure by £35,000, and to carry forward £526,000, against £496,000 brought in.

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

At our last Annual Meeting, I summarised our economic history in 1937 as one of continued progress during the greater part of the year, succeeded by a slight but perceptible pause in the closing months. In the early part of last year, this pause developed into a definite recession. It is in this state of moderated activity that we find ourselves to-day.

The fortunes of individual industries were largely conditioned by the degree of their dependence upon exports, and although a falling-off in home trade was seen in some directions, it was in overseas trade that deterioration was most severe. The textile industries were among the worst hit, and exports of cotton and woollen and worsted goods were about 25–30 per cent. less in volume than in 1937. The rayon trade experienced a very moderate demand for its products, but there was a slight improvement towards the end of the year. For the first time since recovery from the general depression, production in the coal industry and in the iron and steel industry was last year less than in the preceding year. At home, coal consumption was well maintained, but exports were 11 per cent. below those in 1937. The output of steel, at 10,394,000 tons, was 2,590,000 tons (or 20 per cent.) less than in 1937. Engineering, which had been fairly flourishing, became somewhat less active in the closing months of last year, but certain important branches remained busy. Shipbuilding slipped further into depression, with private orders dwindling almost to vanishing point. The year was a disappointing one for agriculture, with few favourable developments to offset many adverse features.

The value of world trade in the first ten months of 1938 fell by 13 per cent., that of our own fell by 8 per cent. The economic evolution of the world has diminished the demands of other countries for many of our products, while not sensibly lessening our dependence upon imports.

The contraction of our overseas trade last year was accompanied by an important change in its balance. The reduction in imports having been greater than that in exports, the gap between the two narrowed—by £43 million. To bridge this gap, we look to our invisible exports. For three years our overseas trading has resulted in deficits of substantial dimensions, and they give legitimate cause for concern.

In this era of sudden alarms and upheavals, fears for the safety and stability of currencies have been frequent and widespread, and fugitive capital has moved very freely from one financial centre to another. Sterling, because of its unique position, has had to bear the brunt of these movements, and in view of the magnitude of the disturbances it was hardly to be expected that our currency would come through unscathed. The Exchange Equalization Fund has proved its worth as a defensive weapon. Without the assistance of this great buttress to our exchange, it would have been impossible to withstand onslaughts on the unprecedented scale recently experienced. Our trade with certain countries which owe their development largely to British capital investment in the past is threatened with extinction. In many countries where British interests were well established, particularly in South-Eastern Europe and South America, they have been seriously jeopardised by the intrusion of political considerations and influences into the economic sphere. A new, and more subtle, form of trading has come into vogue, in which one country undertakes to absorb another's output of a particular crop or material. In practice the interchange has proved to have considerable drawbacks. The dominant partner in the agreement, whilst itself receiving much-needed raw materials, has been able to dump inferior or unwanted goods on the other. In addition, the latter has found itself deprived of the foreign exchange that would have accrued if its goods had been sold through normal channels. But these are the lesser evils. Far more important is the sacrifice of freedom of action by the smaller country, bringing it under a sort of economic hegemony, which may eventually lead to a political hegemony.

In the development of these new trading methods, the totalitarian nations have displayed a remarkable ingenuity. To all intents and purposes, the State is the only seller and the only buyer; the State is a manufacturer in bulk, paying wages fixed by itself; capital and labour can be transferred without a moment's delay from one part of the economic organisation to another; rapid decisions can be made without the necessity for consultation among all the parties concerned; and if the interests of the State as a whole demand it, goods can be either sold below or bought above world prices.

What weapons have we with which to counter competition of this description? The Secretary to the Department of Overseas Trade struck the right note when he said that if the countries concerned continued to employ these unorthodox methods then we should fight them at their own game, and if we fought we should win. These words will have to be backed by deeds. In the first place, our financial resources and our free exchange give us a decided pull. Neither those who sell to us nor those who buy from us need have any fear of becoming enmeshed in complicated exchange difficulties. We are still the world's greatest buyers, and we are not tied to any particular supplier; our importers are free to operate in any market.

It is as a seller that a totalitarian regime has its greatest trading advantage, and in this sphere we can perhaps learn something from our competitors, without adopting all their methods. As I see it, their bulk selling, under the aegis of the State, will have to be countered by bulk selling on our part. Our industries cannot hope to compete successfully in foreign markets unless each is organised to speak, to negotiate, and to bargain, as a unit. Such a course would afford great scope for economy, and the pooling of resources, information and knowledge would enable a more efficient and progressive service to be established.

The Export Credits Guarantee Scheme, which in the past few years has been instrumental in attracting a substantial volume of trade to this country, has recently been extended. Further, a number of important trade agreements, including those with the United States and with Eire, have been concluded which should effect abroadening of our trade.

It has lately become evident that even totalitarian countries are more keenly alive to the need for increased export trade, although the aim of self-sufficiency still governs their policies. So long as the emphasis remains on this policy, concentration upon indigenous products must deny to their peoples the enjoyment of a great variety of articles which are available outside their own borders, this denial being part of the price paid for self-sufficiency. It is certain that the past year has not alleviated, but intensified, hardship in these countries, and it is well to bear in mind that debasement of the standard of living is an inevitable breeder of discontent among peoples, which many times in history has been responsible for national upheavals. But whilst pointing out this economic weakness, I would add that history also teaches that hardships will be endured over a prolonged period before the weight of sheer necessity forces a change.

A bright feature of last year's events was the conclusion of the trade agreement between the United Kingdom and the United States—an event, indeed, whose importance it would be difficult to exaggerate. These two countries together are responsible for more than a quarter of the world's imports and exports, and any arrangement to promote the freer exchange of goods between them must necessarily have a profound influence favourable to the development of world trade.

But this is not the only aspect of the agreement, and indeed it may prove in the long run to be not the most important. In the existing unsettled state of the world, the moral and political implications of the treaty cannot be ignored.

What I have put before you to-day is a plain narrative of the course of trade and industry during the past year. I have so far ventured upon neither forecasts nor theories. I will mention, however, the two outstanding and vital problems that confront this country. For national safety, even perhaps for national existence, we have to expand our armaments to make up the leeway between ourselves and those totalitarian States which have not hesitated to scrap orthodox national economy in the relentless pursuit of military efficiency in all its branches. Secondly, our internal means of subsistence being what they are, we must at the same time keep going such a volume of overseas trade as will pay for the food of our people and the necessary materials without which this country is frustrate and immobile. Further, it is only by preserving our foreign trade that we can maintain our national economy, upon which the Empire has been founded and developed. These are formidable burdens indeed, but we can rely upon the courage and resolution of the nation successfully to bear the load.

The report was unanimously adopted.

MIDLAND BANK LIMITED

THE RIGHT HON. REGINALD McKENNA'S ADDRESS

THE ordinary general meeting of the Midland Bank Limited was held at the Head Office, London, E.C.2, on Thursday last.

The Chairman, the Right Hon. R. McKenna, after referring with sorrow to the death of Mr. Hyde, late Managing Director, said (in part):

In common with all other business undertaking, banks felt the decline of trade activity during the first half of last year, but it was not until the autumn that they became affected in a special way by the withdrawal on a large scale of foreign funds, a withdrawal induced by the grave international anxieties at that time.

For the purpose of financing world trade considerable foreign balances are always held with London banks. These, however, are sometimes heavily supplemented for reasons having nothing to do with trade. In 1936 and 1937 foreign balances in London were steadily increased, reaching their maximum in the spring of last year. The movement was then reversed as the European political outlook became threatening, and in nine months nearly the whole addition to foreign balances, accumulated over more than two years, has been re-transferred from London to other centres.

When foreigners were increasing their balances in London the Exchange Account prevented a too rapid rise in the exchange value of sterling by continual purchases of gold. Part of the gold was re-sold to the Bank of England, but even so the accumulation by the Exchange Account was very large. When the movement of foreign balances was reversed and heavy sales of sterling over the exchanges took place, the Exchange Account again exercised its function of maintaining a fairly steady rate for sterling, and sold gold as readily as it had previously bought it.

To see how the banks were specially affected by the withdrawal of foreign deposits we may follow the course of a typical transaction. When a foreign deposit is withdrawn, the cheque drawn upon the bank is met in the clearing by a claim upon the bank's balance at the Bank of England. A number of intermediate transactions may then take place in which the money passes through the hands of exchange brokers, bullion dealers and their banks. For the sake of simplicity we may omit these from consideration and, looking only at the conclusion of the various dealings, we find that the money paid out by the bank from its Bank of England balance goes to pay for gold sold by the Exchange Equalisation Account, and is then utilised by the Exchange Account in taking up Treasury bills. Thus public deposits in the Bank of England are increased by the amount paid for Treasury bills, corresponding to the reduction in bankers' balances arising from withdrawal of the foreign deposit.

It is here that the banks feel the pinch in the reduction of their cash reserves. The money has passed out of the banking stream into the pool of public deposits. Ordinarily, however, the consequent stringency is only temporary and is continually being eased. The Government does not keep an unusually large balance for long; the added amount of its balance is shortly distributed among contractors and others, who have their accounts with the joint stock banks, and in this way the money comes back to the joint stock banks as a deposit and passes once again into bankers' balances in the accounts of the Bank of England. Thus the original cash position of the banks as a whole is in the end made good, and, on the supposition—to which I shall refer later—that they are able to work back to their customary ratios, deposits also will in due course be restored. The only important change will be that a larger proportion of the deposits will be domestic and a smaller, foreign.

We may note that the withdrawal of the exceptional foreign deposits accumulated in recent years has not materially diminished the importance of London as a centre for financing world trade. But far more noteworthy is the fact that, contrary to all previous experience, the transfer was effected without any rise in the Bank rate. There was no monetary restriction to aggravate the shrinkage of internal business which was already taking place as the universal falling away of 1938 developed. Although in the autumn interest rates in the money market stiffened, the movement was without effect on the cost of accommodation for business. The abundance of available bank-credit was unimpaired, a small decline in advances being due, not to any restrictive policy, but simply to a natural reduction in demand for borrowed money.

Thus we see how with this new and efficient instrument, the Exchange Equalisation Account, in skilful operation there need be no conflict between the measures required to cope with large and irregular exchange movements and the measures required to maintain an internal monetary policy appropriate to the conditions of domestic business and finance. The conduct of the Exchange Account is entrusted to the Bank of England, acting as agent for the Treasury, and the events of last year afforded a valuable test of the working of a managed currency under exceptional and very difficult conditions. I could quote many examples to show how, under the gold standard, external influences caused grave disturbance to internal credit. The vulnerability of the money market to external influences was extreme, and was due mainly to the statutory obligation to maintain the pound sterling at a fixed gold value. To-day the central bank is no longer under this obligation; there is freedom to allow the rate of exchange to swing more widely and, by judicious purchases or sale of gold to take the weight of great international movements of funds without affecting internal trade credit.

A more lasting result of the outward flow of foreign funds than its reaction upon the banks is found in the appreciation of the dollar. The first effect of the outflow was to create a demand for dollars which, not being offset by a simultaneous sale of gold, tended to depress sterling in the exchange market. As the outflow continued, the counteracting influence of the gold sales lagged constantly behind, and sterling sank to a lower level. The recent fall of sterling was the reverse of what happened in earlier years, when the inflow of foreign funds, notwithstanding the very large purchases of gold, forced the dollar down, down even to a level at which sterling probably became materially overvalued. Thus, even though in both periods the weight of the transfer was ultimately carried by official dealings in gold, nevertheless under the pressure of the inward flow of foreign funds sterling touched 5.04, while on the outward movement it fell momentarily to 4.62.

THE NEW SYSTEM AND THE OLD.

The Exchange Equalisation Account is an essential part of the machinery for regulating monetary conditions. Let me observe, however, that no monetary mechanism can of itself perform the numerous and complicated tasks connected with the control of currency and credit. In internal policy, for instance, it must always be difficult to draw a precise line between the legitimate demands of trade and the illegitimate demands of excessive speculation. Expansion and contraction cannot be regulated by a sort of financial thermostat, acting automatically according to the temperature of the economic body. No automatic system could be devised which would prove sufficiently elastic or adaptable for the purpose. The new technique of monetary management called into being since 1931 requires for its proper exercise far more knowledge, judgment and skill than were needed in working on the gold standard. There was no room for doubt then as to the action to be taken. If too much gold was leaving the country the Bank rate was put up and credit restricted until gold flowed back. If gold was coming in beyond what was necessary for reserve requirements, the Bank rate was lowered until foreign borrowing checked the inward flow.

The simplicity, the almost automatism, of currency and credit control under the gold standard has been highly praised. But at what cost to trade and industry did the system operate? The Bank rate might have to be raised when internal conditions required not restriction but expansion of credit—as for example last year, when the outflow of gold would have led to severe credit restriction at the very time when confidence was already shaken and enterprise languishing. Seen in retrospect, the pre-war automatism in monetary affairs meant doing nothing until an acute stage of financial weakness had been reached—a stage at which drastic action was inevitable, however damaging its effects might be on industry and trade. But why should the British industrialist and trader pay more for credit, or find credit more difficult to obtain, because foreign capitalists choose to transfer their bank balances from London to New York? Open market dealings by the Bank of England and the operations of the Exchange Equalisation Account are the modern instruments of control, and after several years' experience we can appreciate how well they have been used.

It must not be overlooked that the departure from the gold standard is by no means the same thing as the abandonment of gold as an instrument of monetary policy. Gold plays and will continue to play an essential part in the exchange relations between countries conducting the bulk of international trade. But for us it no longer plays a governing part. True, our stock of gold is much larger than ever it was in the old days, but the essence of the present system lies not in the amount but in the availability of the stock. The gold both in the Exchange Equalisation Account and in the Bank of England can be made immediately available, as we have recently seen, for regulating the external value of sterling without necessarily affecting our internal issue of currency. The great achievement of monetary progress since 1931 is the discovery that our domestic business can be protected against extraneous developments with which it has nothing to do and for which it is not responsible, and that we can expand or contract credit according to internal needs. To this extent at least we have become masters in our own house.

Remember that a good monetary system will facilitate trade but cannot make it. Sustained recovery in the United States would be the biggest single factor in a general revival of world trade. There have recently been welcome signs of recovery in that country, but we cannot be certain that it is on a solid foundation until we see a convincing revival of capital investment. New capital construction on a large scale, which is essential for the maintenance of a high level of employment, will be undertaken

(Continued on page 153)

MIDLAND BANK LIMITED

(*Continued from page 152*)

only when men of business can allow themselves a confident outlook on the future. If, as in America, savings are left idle through fear and are not ventured freely in new enterprise, trade depression sets in and unemployment increases. There is no similar ground for depression in our own country, but we cannot isolate ourselves from depressing factors elsewhere. The most we can say is that the decline here has been less than in many other countries and that our general standard of living has been fully maintained.

TAXATION AND BORROWING.

The problem of the proper use to be made of the nation's savings presents at the moment no difficulties for us; it is solved by the fact that the Government has come into the market as a borrower on a large scale. The great additional expenditure on armaments has to be met, and the question of ways and means is gravely exercising the minds of all engaged in commerce and industry, no less than the mind of the Chancellor.

The choice lies between additional taxation, borrowing, or something of each. If labour to-day were in full employment I should, for my part, unhesitatingly lay the emphasis on taxation. But when there is very considerable unemployment, questions arise which may lead to a different conclusion. New taxation disturbs industry for the time being by reducing the demand for goods of widespread consumption, or at any rate by creating a belief that there will be such a reduction in the near future. Orders are withheld and employment is consequently diminished. In a condition of full employment the labour so displaced might readily be absorbed, but when we have already nearly two million people unemployed we must be careful not to add to their number. The additional expenditure by the Government ought if possible to be so directed as to bring into productive activity men and women who are now out of employment. Taxation will not help in this respect; borrowing, on the other hand, under existing conditions will stimulate employment, and as the demand for labour grows industrialists will be forced ultimately to draw from the pool of unemployed. The limit to this policy is obviously reached when all labour employable at a profit at the current rate of wages is fully engaged, but we are a long way from that condition at the present time.

Obviously, for a country which produces within its own borders so little of the raw materials required for rearmament, the carrying out of a vast programme such as Great Britain has undertaken must involve an expansion of the volume of imports, against which there is no prospect of countervailing exports. Add to this the laying in of stocks of food and other necessaries, and there arises a strong probability that our current income from sales abroad of British goods and services and the yield on our overseas investments may be insufficient to meet our purchases. A year ago I suggested that the balance of payments is under ordinary conditions a test of whether we are right or wrong in going on with an expansive monetary policy. I expressed some doubt as to the accuracy of previous estimates, but it may well be now that our specially enlarged imports have not been financed out of current income from abroad. Are we then to infer that the time has come when our monetary policy should be reversed, and restrictive financial measures adopted in order to reduce cousumption?

I do not think we need contemplate, as an early necessity, any such drastic—and damaging—steps. The temporary enlargement of imports for purposes of defence is a different matter from a growth of imports for immediate consumption. If we are incurring a deficit on our current balance of payments we must, it is true, be drawing on our capital abroad; but so far as we are accumulating stocks we are merely exchanging one kind of asset for another. In any case we are not drawing on our capital abroad to maintain a standard of living higher than we can afford. If it should become clear that rearmament is causing true inflation, as indicated by over-employment and an all-round rise in costs, it will, I think, be undeniable that restrictive measures have become a matter of urgency. But I see no sign of a near approach to that condition.

From all this I conclude that our monetary system and practice are well fitted to cope with the great demands imposed by national necessities. We are, moreover, far stronger than ever before to face any possibilities of financial disturbance that might arise from developments abroad.

The Chairman then referred to Sir John Anderson's resignation (owing to taking office) and to the deaths of Mr. Darling and Mr. Wooley. Also to the appointment to the Board of Mr. Arthur Chamberlain. Continuing, he said:

The net profit, at £2,446,000, is slightly less than for 1397, but the decline is more than accounted for by the larger provisions required for income tax and national defence contribution. There has in fact been little change, as between the two years, in the actual earning power of the Bank. Adding to the sum I have mentioned the balance brought forward, we have £3,037,000 for disposal. We are appropriating this year £150,000 to reduction of bank premises account. To reserve for future contingencies we have set aside £500,000. The interim dividend of eight per cent. less tax absorbed £879, 000, and for a final dividend at the same rate an equal amount will be required. The sum of £628,000 is carried forward.

Deposits are £34 millions below the record figure of December 1937. It is natural that heavy withdrawals of foreign-owned funds from London should be reflected most clearly in the figures of the Bank which transacts probably the largest share of the overseas business passing through London. We should ordinarily be justified in regarding the shrinkage in total bank deposits as likely to prove no more than temporary; indeed, the first sign of re-expansion is already apparent in the restoration of cash reserves. Our cash on December 31 provided a ratio exceeding 11½ per cent. of deposits, whereas on some weekly make-up days within the last four months of the year the ratio was only a little above ten. With cash reserves replenished, therefore, we might reasonably expect a rapid recovery of deposits to the former level; but at present what would ordinarily be regarded as probable is subject to an important qualification. The banks must look not only to the maintenance of a requisite cash ratio, but also to the provision of an adequate supply of supporting liquid assets, particularly bills. If they cannot find sufficient bills to keep up their second line of defence, they must maintain a stronger first line, by working to a higher ratio of cash to deposits.

This is exactly the position at the present time. The banks cannot proceed to a re-expansion of deposits on the restored cash basis, because they cannot acquire the bills they need to ensure fulfilment of their standards of liquidity. Our discounts of trade bills have declined by £9 millions over the year, and, so far from being able to make up a compensating total of Treasury bills, our holding of these has diminished by no less than £25½ millions. The supply of bills—and I speak here of Treasury bills, which provide the great bulk of the total—is determined in the long run by policy in respect of public finance.

In view of the seasonal inflow of taxation, there seems little prospect of a fuller supply of bills becoming available in the early future; hence the re-expansion of deposits may be delayed, even though it appears that the outflow of foreign money may now be coming to an end. On a longer view, however, provided bank cash is maintained at the restored level, and more bills are issued to the market, there is no reason to suppose that the decline in bank deposits will prove more than a passing phase.

Money at call and short notice stands at about the same figure as a year ago; activity on the stock exchange has remained at a low level and a smaller volume of bills is being carried in the money market, the decline in loans to bill brokers being offset, however, by other short money items. Advances are on balance £1 million higher, but, whereas in the first half of the year they continued to increase, since then trade conditions have led to a diminution of borrowing.

Investments are slightly higher, this being the net effect of purchases of short-dated securities earlier in the year, almost wholly offset by sales in the later months with a view to increasing our liquid resources. In conformity with our practice of entering investments in the balance sheet "at or under market value" we have made full provision to cover depreciation. Acceptances are down by £3 millions, partly due to the shrinkage in the turnover of international trade, and partly to the smaller proportion conducted by the time-honoured method of London acceptance credits. Engagements are unchanged in amount, but the note on the balance sheet gives a figure for forward exhange commitments £4 millions higher on the year. The expansion is mainly in dollar liabilities.

You would perhaps wish me, before I sit down, to mention the special measures taken to protect the interests of our staff and customers against the physical risks of war. Already, when the crisis of last autumn occurred, our plans were well advanced in several directions. We had arranged for the duplication of ledger balances and other records as an insurance against the difficulties that might arise from destruction. Currency stocks in provincial centres were enlarged, to avoid any local shortage that might have resulted from transport difficulties. A scheme had been elaborated for decentralisation of head office management as far as possible. And for those who would of necessity have had to remain in exposed positions we had made such arrangements for personal protection as were feasible. In all urban branches our staff was organised to deal with the disturbances that might arise within the bank from air raids, and I may add that large numbers of them had volunteered for national service of one kind or another. All the measures evolved are being kept in working order and under constant review, ready to be put into action at short notice if, as we devoutly hope may not be the case, an emergency should arise.

THE OUTLOOK.

The business outlook is still overshadowed by international anxieties, but, just as we have experienced sudden turns for the worse in foreign affairs, so we may yet experience an equally sudden change for the better. If this should happily take place there would be little doubt as to the probability of a marked recovery in business during the coming year. Even as things are, I think we may reasonably look for some modest improvement. In external trade, the Anglo-American agreement and the arrangements associated with it mark a big step forward in the direction of a larger volume of free interchange of goods over the greater part of the world. In domestic trade, we are probably far from having felt the full effect of the rearmament programme in stimulating output and employment. On all grounds, there is assuredly no room for despondency; our difficulties are there to be overcome, and a brighter future will reward the exercise of patience, courage and resource in dealing with the problems we are called upon to face.

The report was adopted, other ordinary business was transacted, and the proceedings ended with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

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Rates and all information on page 165

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